



*The Young Traveller in*  
**SOUTH AFRICA**

*ANTHONY DELIUS*

WITH A MAP,  
25 PHOTOGRAPHS  
AND FRONTISPIECE



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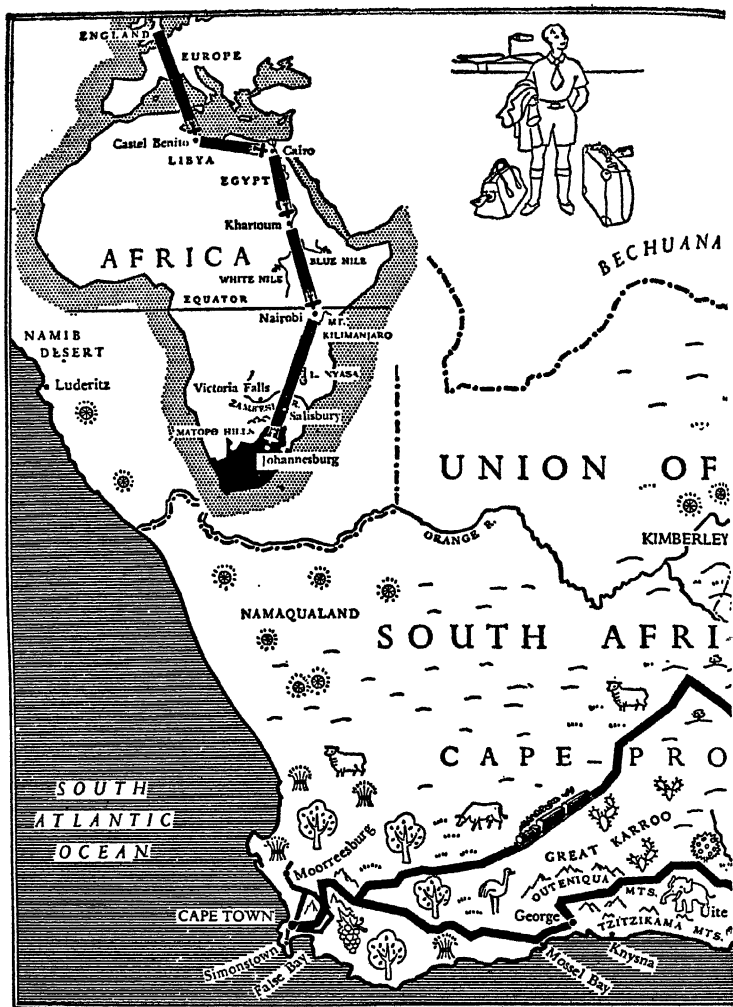
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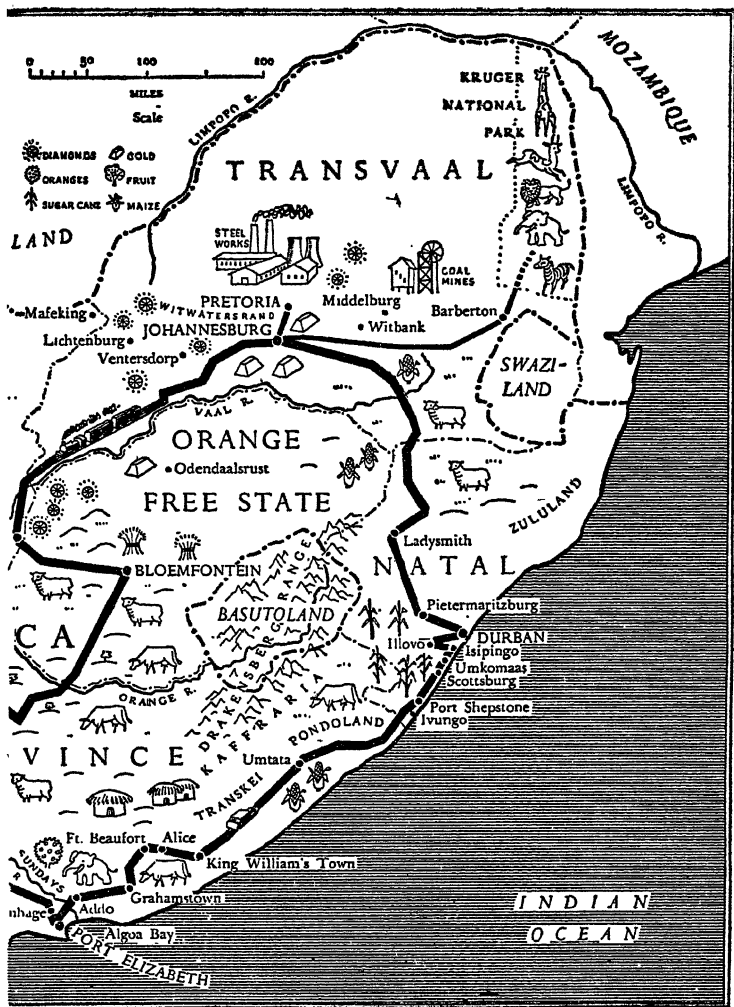
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*The thick black line on the main map shows the route taken by Dick and his father on their trip round the Union.*



*The small map in the top left-hand corner shows the route covered by the plane that brought them from England to Johannesburg.*

## ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

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## *Chapter 1*

### DICK WISLEY HEARS GOOD NEWS

Mrs Wisley was definitely a little dismayed when her husband told her that he was going on a business trip to South Africa.

'Oh, dear!' she cried. 'Just as you've really recovered from flu you have to go off and risk catching some tropical fever.'

'Really, my dear,' Mr Wisley said mildly, 'South Africa is one of the healthiest parts of the whole continent. There wasn't anything wrong with George Blackson's health, was there? In fact, he said that parts of the country were as good for people with weak lungs as Switzerland.'

George Blackson was a friend of Mr Wisley's university days. He had visited the Wisleys two years ago when he was in England on business, and they all remembered his bustling energy.

'You might be eaten by a lion, Dad', said Dick, who had once read about somebody in South Africa finding one in his yard.

'I'd be scared to death', Margaret cried, shuddering at the thought of meeting a lion in the vegetable garden.

'I feel pretty confident that the South Africans have got all their lions under control by now', said their father.

'What do they do there—the South Africans, I mean?' asked Dick.

'Well, they dig up more quantities of gold and diamonds there than in any other country in the world—that at least I do know', said his father.

'I suppose everybody's frightfully rich', Margaret said.

'As a matter of fact, now I come to think of it, I do seem to recall that I've heard the names of a lot of South African millionaires at one time or another', Mr Wisley remarked. 'And one of the reasons why I'm going out there is that South Africa has the reputation of being Britain's best customer.'

'Gosh, how I envy you, Dad!' Dick said, coming out of a day-dream about lions in backyards. 'It'll be a lovely trip. How long will it take?'

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'Well, I'll go by air and that's something over six thousand miles.'

'Roger', said Mrs Wisley thoughtfully, 'are you sure about the air there being good for people's lungs?'

'Moderately certain', replied Mr Wisley. 'Why?'

'I was just thinking. That touch of pneumonia Dick had last year. Of course, I know there's nothing to worry about, really.'

'What!' cried Mr Wisley. 'For the sake of the boy's lungs you're willing to throw him to the lions?' He laughed for a moment and then became serious again. 'No, my dear, I don't think there's an earthly hope that I'll be able to take Dick along with me.'

Hope rose and sank in Dick's heart almost simultaneously.

'Still, it would be—' Mrs Wisley sighed and didn't continue.

Dick's interest in South Africa had been aroused by all this and he and his sister went to see their friend Allan, who was fourteen, the same age as Margaret, and a year older than Dick.

'South Africa?' said Allan. 'Can't say I know much about it. They fought Zulus there once—or was it Fuzzy-wuzzies? No, it was Zulus, black people. I suppose there's some of them left still. Oh, and they had the Boer War there, so I suppose there must be some Boers left. In fact, I'm certain there are some Boers left, because Field Marshal Smuts was one, the South African Prime Minister; there's a statue of him near the Houses of Parliament.'

'We know that', Margaret said, rather annoyed by Allan's superior tone.

'It's one of the Dominions, too', Allan went on.

'I know that too', Dick said.

'Well, then, that's about all I can tell you', Allan said. 'Why don't you try to find something to read about it?'

Dick went off to his local library to look for something to read about South Africa. He looked under 'Africa' and found the shelves groaning under new books about that continent. About half of them seemed to be about South Africa. He flipped through the chapter headings of some—they kept referring to something called 'race relations' and something else called *apartheid*. Most of the books seemed either angry or sad, but one or two appeared to think things were splendid. A map in one showed the 'Union of South Africa' on the prow of the continent. It had four 'provinces',

## DICK WISLEY HEARS GOOD NEWS

Cape, Orange Free State, Transvaal, and Natal; two British 'Protectorates' lying within it, Swaziland and Basutoland; and a big mandated territory, South West Africa, growing out of one side of it like a dog's ear. But he'd learned all this before, so after his first fine frenzy he began to forget all about the place.

But one day, about a week after they first heard that Mr Wisley might be going to South Africa, the two children met their father as he turned in at the front gate and they knew immediately that he had exciting news. There was something about the way he looked at them, with a mysterious half-smile, that gave him away.

'Something's happened', cried Margaret as she danced along beside him up the path. 'Come on, Dad, tell us.'

'No, your mother must hear it at the same time', said Mr Wisley.

And when they were all together in the drawing-room Mr Wisley broke the news that he had arranged for Dick to fly with him to South Africa and that they were leaving in a fortnight's time!



## *Chapter 2*

# THROUGH AFRICA IN HALF A DAY

London's great sprawl of buildings and the Channel fell away in the early afternoon; Rome, the Italian coast, and the blue Mediterranean dropped behind towards evening; and near midnight Dick's father nudged him awake to say they were coming down to Cairo. Dick wondered if he was not really going to wake up soon and find himself back in his bed at home.

He peered out of his window as the big South African Airways Constellation circled in the night. Below he saw the spreading lights and deep shadows of Africa's largest and most ancient city. Alongside it glinted a long line of water and Dick turned to his father excitedly: 'Is it . . . ?' he began.

'Yes, that's the Nile', said his father smiling, and then added, 'and over there, on the far edge of the city, the Sahara desert begins.'

A few minutes later a little bump told them they had touched down. Soon two uniformed officials, plump and smiling, with gleaming dark faces, boarded the aircraft. Dick looked at them curiously as they passed, for they were the first Egyptians he had ever seen. Outside on the big stretch of tarmac the air was dry and warm even at that time of the night. Dick felt a little trickle of sweat run down inside his vest. He looked up at the clear enormous sky. The stars seemed bigger than he had ever seen them before.

His father's voice broke into his thoughts: 'Everybody told me that the nights were always magnificent in Africa.'

Mr Wisley was not talking to his son, but to a tall tanned man who looked as if he had been dried lean by the sun. He was also a passenger on the Constellation, a Rhodesian tobacco farmer.

'Sometimes', said the Rhodesian, 'it seems to me that the night sky is the only thing that remains the same in Africa. Everything else is changing fast—a sight too fast if you ask some of us . . .'

'Us?' asked Mr Wisley. 'You mean the Rhodesians?'

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'I mean the whole five million Whites who live on this continent of 180 million Blacks', said the Rhodesian.

Within an hour or so the aircraft had been refuelled and they were all back in the air again, speeding south. Dick, nodding into a doze, thought what a waste it was to have been to Cairo, flown down the length of the longest river in Africa, and passed over the greatest desert in the world without really seeing any of them. He did come down in the Sahara again, at the junction of the Blue and White Niles, at Khartoum. He was glad that they were not going to spend much time in those parts; the heat almost made him feel ill, and that was in the small hours of the morning when anybody might expect the place to cool off a little.

'Phew!' he said, as the aircraft rose again from the capital of the Sudanese Republic. And he fell asleep almost immediately from sheer exhaustion.

He woke up feeling stiff and crumpled, but the morning that looked in through his port-hole was bright, smiling, and blue.

'We're dropping down over Kenya already', said his father.

Dick thought without regret of the burning thousand miles he had missed. Staring down he could see a country as totally different from desert as could be imagined. Lakes far away in the distance, forests, mountains, even some peaks gleaming with snow and glaciers in the early morning sunlight.

'Mount Kenya', said the Rhodesian, leaning over to Mr Wisley. 'The loveliest mountain in Africa.'

Then he leaned further over and pointed down to the big forested range of mountains passing far below them.

'There, right next to the loveliness of Mount Kenya', he added, 'that's where some of the ugliest events in recent African history took place.'

'What happened there?' asked Mr Wisley, peering down.

'Those are the Aberdare Mountains. The thick forests you can see around their slopes is where the Mau Mau terrorists used to hide. Took a whole division of British troops nearly two years to root them out of those forests.'

'Fasten your safety belts please', said the air hostess.

As the plane swept in a wide circle preparatory to landing, Dick had his greatest thrill of the journey. Looking down he saw tiny

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dots running in a long line across a plain. 'Dad! Dad!' he cried, nudging his father. 'What are those?'

His father became nearly as excited as he was. 'They must be buck! This is big game country now.'

'They might have been anything', said the Rhodesian later, in the airport restaurant, where they were having breakfast. 'Zebra, wildebeest, buck. Nairobi is the only city in the world with a big natural game-park on its door-step.'

'What a wonderful thing to have!' cried Dick.

'The people here believe Nairobi is the most wonderful city in Africa', said the Rhodesian. 'Lovely scenery all round, nearby lakes filled with flamingoes, the weather always summer.' Then he fell silent.

'But what?' asked Dick's father at last.

'Look over there', said the Rhodesian.

Dick looked apprehensively round. The black waiters moved about cheerfully in their long white gowns. Four Africans in trim European suits, with brief-cases leaning against the legs of their chairs, sat eating breakfast at a nearby table. The Rhodesian jerked his head at the group.

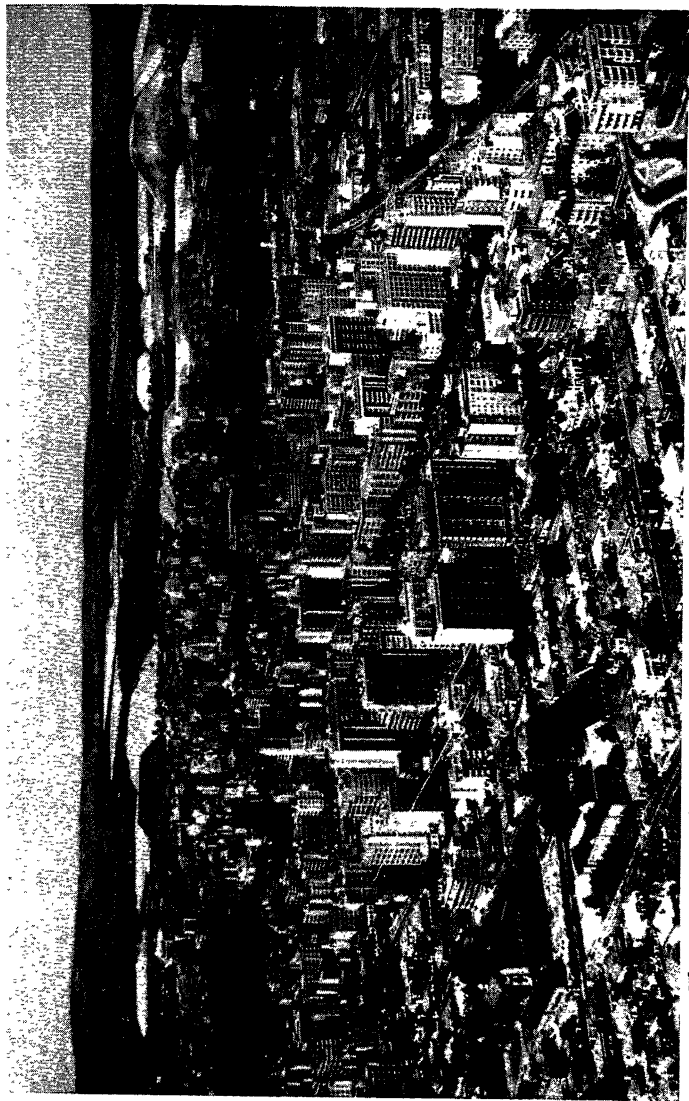
'What the Mau Mau failed to do by terror, these new African Nationalist politicians will do by politics—take over everything the Whites have built up here', he said gloomily.

'It's a tremendous problem, how to grant people their independence in the best way for everybody', Mr Wisley remarked.

'It's an even bigger problem further south as the number of White people gets greater', said the Rhodesian.

They were already in the southern hemisphere. They had crossed the Equator a few miles north of Nairobi. Not long after they had taken to the air again they saw far below them the great snow-filled crater of Africa's highest mountain, Kilimanjaro. Far away on their right was a haze which somebody said must be Lake Victoria, the source of the Nile, a vast stretch of water about the size of Scotland. But the world passing beneath the plane looked anything but watery. It appeared as if the whole continent was nothing but dark, hot bush stretching away to the furthest horizons.

A thousand miles further on Dick saw the first major sign of



*The great carpet of big and little buildings which was Johannesburg rolled away over the hills, skirted by what appeared to be sand-dunes but were gold-mine dumps.*



*Passers-by in Johannesburg. ABOVE: Most natives wear European dress or a mixture of western and African costume. BELOW: A native street market.*

water again. It was a big river crawling from west to east like a thin brown snake with a wiggle in the middle. This was the River Zambesi. Over one great ledge in the wiggle churned and roared the white waters of the Victoria Falls.

'Africans call it "The Smoke that Thunders"', said the Rhodesian.

They landed quite near the Victoria Falls, at the little Northern Rhodesian town of Livingstone—named after David Livingstone, the explorer, who discovered the Falls. The Rhodesian went off to catch another plane to Bulawayo in Southern Rhodesia. 'Come and see me on my farm one day', he shouted as he went off.

Their lunch was shared by a small, energetic Jewish fellow passenger, who was returning from a business trip to his home in Johannesburg. As they chatted Mr Wisley said that he supposed he would find colonial business methods much the same as those in England.

Their companion laid down his knife and fork. 'Please, Mr Wisley', he said, 'do not call us colonials.'

'No, of course not', said Mr Wisley, a little hastily. 'You're a—a-dominionite, is that right?'

'You come from England, I call you an Englishman. I come from South Africa, you call me a South African', said their fellow passenger, smiling.

'I see', said Mr Wisley.

'You'll find it quite important to call people by their right names in South Africa', said the other. 'It's a country full of right names and wrong names.'

Soon they were on their way again, flying over Southern Rhodesia. Their lunch table companion acted as unofficial guide, supplementing information given over the loud-speaker by the pilot.

'Over there are the Zimbabwe Ruins. Some people say they were the capital of the mysterious old Monomotapa Empire, and others say they were the place where King Solomon got his gold from. Nobody really knows, though.'

And pointing in another direction: 'Down there are the Matopo Hills. Great big boulders rolled out on the veld, piled on top of one another. Rhodes is buried there—the man who more than anyone else brought modern South Africa into being.'

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A little later the pilot's voice said, 'We are now passing over the Limpopo River, into the Union.'

A memory stirred in Dick. 'Not Kipling's *Just So* river, "the great, grey-green, greasy Limpopo River all set about with fever trees" where Elephant Child got his trunk?' he asked his father.

'The very same', said Mr Wisley, laughing.

Very soon they began to lose height again. Bush country had now given way to rolling grass-lands, cut up into squares and oblongs of farms. Everywhere were signs of human activity. Long scratches of roads, small brown dams, tiny houses, little towns came into view. The country had a brown, dry appearance. They passed over some low hills and on the other side lay a large town, Pretoria, the capital of South Africa, Dick learned. A great carpet of big and smaller buildings unrolled away over more hills. Thrusting up between them rose big whitish-yellow sand-dunes.

'The mine dumps', exclaimed the Jewish gentleman, leaning over. 'For you home is the White Cliffs of Dover—for me it is the mine dumps of the Rand!'

'Of the what?' asked Dick.

'The Rand—the Reef, the biggest gold-bearing reef in the world.'

By now Dick was beginning to get used to hearing about something being the biggest this, that, or the other in the world. It was a phrase he was to hear often in the next few months. They had circled out over open country again. By the familiar tightening in his ears Dick knew that they were coming down very rapidly now. Big airport buildings and long concrete runways were coming up to them. Dick felt the little bump that told him they had touched down at their destination at last. . .

He looked at his father's watch; it was half past two in the afternoon.

## *Chapter 3*

# THE CITY OF GOLD

There seemed to be a trace of cold in the air when Dick and his father stepped down on to the concrete of Jan Smuts Airport. At first Dick thought it was simply the breeze caused by one or two of the big aircraft warming up as they waited to take off. But when he looked up into the cloudless light blue sky he felt that it, too, had something chilly about it, in spite of the time being early afternoon. Certainly, he decided, this part of South Africa did not have the same heavy warmth as Cairo, Nairobi, or Livingstone.

Even as he walked towards the people lining the barrier before the big airport building, Dick began to feel that there must be a greater hurry about life in Johannesburg than elsewhere in Africa. The uniformed Africans seemed to move at the double pushing trolleys of luggage to and from the planes. Absorbed officials hastened past studying passenger lists. Almost as urgently George Blackson rushed up as they reached the barrier, greeted them heartily, and cried, 'Come on, let's get you through all this, and away home!'

Dick had of course met Mr Blackson two years before. Even then he had seemed a person of great energy, but back in his native Johannesburg he fairly whizzed along. As Dick followed his host's plump and bobbing figure he hardly had time to notice what was about him. The airport was like a very new and very clean railway station, lined with shops, stalls, restaurants, newspaper booths, waiting rooms—and thick with people. But this was a fleeting impression, gained as Mr Blackson tumbled them past immigration officials, customs officers, collected their luggage, summoned assistance from two Black porters, and swept them all into the bright sunlight again.

'I don't believe in hanging around airports', said Mr Blackson, as they drove away in his big American car.

Dick sank back and relaxed while his father and their host talked. Beds of brilliant flowers went by on the outskirts of the airport.



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Grassy fields with big weeping willows and meditative cows came and went. Single houses or clusters of them were dotted about the rolling brown countryside, all of them single-storeyed, many of them with very modern flat lines. Some had hedges round them and neat gardens, others simply began where the 'veld' stopped—Dick had learned to call open country 'veld' from their Rhodesian friend.

They came to an immense, flat-topped mine-dump of sun-baked yellowish clay with great steps or ledges down each side. The size of it surprised him. He saw another in the distance, much more hill-shaped, with a line of small trucks crawling up its side. ('Cocopans taking more earth up!' said Mr Blackson breaking off his conversation briefly.) At the base of one dump Dick saw circular dams filled with clay-coloured water. ('Slime dams!' interjected Mr Blackson again.) Wheels spun continuously on the top of derricks, big corrugated iron roofs glinted in the sun. A touch of mystery was given by a high fence running right round each mine. Dick wondered whether he would get a chance to know something of the secrets of gold-mining.

'We'll take you over one later', said Mr Blackson, reading his thoughts. 'Too complicated to explain going along in a car.'

Suddenly they were past all this and into a world in which everything seemed brand new or just about to be built or pulled down. Some bomb-sites in London looked mildly like it, but nowhere else Dick had seen. He had to fall back on photographs he remembered—it seemed to him that the people who had built New York had suddenly popped up in Africa to build a smaller scale model of their city among the mine-dumps. Square and rectangular structures rose all about them as they threaded their way into steadily increasing traffic. Soon the streets were choked with vehicles. The pavements were also filled with people, as many Black as White, passing the big shop-windows. Africans were everywhere, driving cars and lorries, riding bicycles or motorized delivery-trolleys, hurrying along the streets in shirt-sleeves or smart or tattered suits. The traffic grew thicker and thicker and Mr Blackson grew angrier and angrier with it.

'Blast you!' he roared at a lorry. 'Do you want to take my front mudguard off!'

A surprised Black face looked out at him.

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'These lorry drivers!' groaned Mr Blackson.

'Isn't South Africa much cooler than the rest of Africa?' asked Dick suddenly, remembering his first impression at the airport.

'Well first, we're six thousand feet above sea level here', said Mr Blackson. 'And secondly it's winter.'

'Why, of course', said Dick's father. 'Every season is the opposite to the season at home.'

'That's it', agreed Mr Blackson. 'But it's even more opposite than that in this Province, the Transvaal. Up here we have cold, clear dry winters—and summers with rain and thunderstorms you can almost set your clock by, they come so regularly.'

'You mean it's different in the Cape Province?' asked Mr Wisley.

'In the Cape coastal belt they have rainy winters and hot dry windy summers', said Mr Blackson. 'That South-Easter wind they have would drive me crazy, but the Cape people seem to get used to it.'

'You've certainly got a country of contrasts!' said Dick's father.

'Mind you, it's nearly a thousand miles to the Cape Peninsula, so we don't notice the contrast too much', Mr Blackson said.

As they went on wheedling their way through the traffic, their host explained South Africa's geography to them. 'Think of one half of an egg that has been sliced clean down the middle. The interior of South Africa is a big hump rather like that egg in shape with the pointed end to the south. A frill of mountains runs all down the east side of the hump and curls right round the south over to the west. And beyond that frill of mountains lies the green coastal belt like a piece of lettuce. But from where the hump drops away on the west side it's mostly the arid, desert region of Bechuanaland and South West Africa. And it gets steadily more desolate till you hit the howling wastes of the Namib Desert and the Skeleton Coast along the Atlantic.'

'We're pretty high up on the hump, are we?' asked Dick.

'Yes, very nearly on the highest part—if you go a hundred miles to the north it begins to drop steeply down to the Lowveld. This big central hump is called the Highveld. It's saddled by two Provinces, the Transvaal and the Orange Free State. Down in the south-eastern corners of the Transvaal and the Free State lie the two British Protectorates, Swaziland and mountainous Basutoland

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Beyond these little territories and the Drakensburg Mountains lies the so-called Garden Province of Natal. It's a place full of paw-paws, pineapples, and bananas, with lovely beaches haunted by occasional man-eating sharks from the Indian Ocean.'

Dick reviewed his own reading on the subject of the Union. He recollected how the Transvaal and the Orange Free State had been two republics founded by the Dutch-speaking Boers who had trekked away from the British-ruled Cape. Then had come the South African War and the Boer republics had been conquered by the British after a bitter struggle. But eight years later the two ex-republics and the two old British colonies of the Cape and Natal had joined together, and become 'Provinces' of one Union of South Africa.

'And the Cape? Where does it begin, sir?' asked Dick.

'Just below the Orange Free State, south of the Orange River', said Mr Blackson. 'Think of it as two half circles—an inner one that is a big semi-desert area full of strange-shaped hills and big plains called the Karoo; and the outer one is the delightful coastal belt—delightful, that is, once you've got used to that darned wind . . .'

The geography lesson was suddenly broken off by a glad shout from their teacher. 'Eureka! A parking place!' Taking no notice of the cries and curses that rose all about him, Mr Blackson peeled off suddenly into a little bay beside the pavement.

'I'll just go up to my office a moment. Back in five minutes—then we'll make for home', he said, and leaped out and vanished along the crowded pavement. Dick and his father were left contemplating the big shop windows, two coffee-bars, one little restaurant, a big cinema, an even bigger hotel, a vast office-block, the ceaseless traffic, and crowded pavements.

'I suppose many of these Black people we see passing must be Zulus and Hottentots', said Dick to his father.

'Not many Hottentots', said Mr Wisley, who had read better authorities than his son. 'The only pure Hottentots left are over in that semi-desert region on the West that George was telling us about. I suppose there must be some Zulus passing. But they are only one of the bigger tribes among the Union's eleven million Black people. Then there are Indians and half-castes, called Coloured people, as well.'

Dick studied the passing crowds more closely. 'I wonder if there are any Boers among them', he said.

'By the law of averages three out of every five White people you see passing should be Boers—or Afrikaners as they are called today ...'

'Not quite!' said Mr Blackson, returning almost as suddenly as he had departed. 'It's true that slightly more than three-fifths of our three million White citizens are Afrikaners, or Afrikaans-speaking. But the great majority of the English-speaking citizens live concentrated in the big cities like Johannesburg, Cape Town, Durban.'

'Oh yes, I remember now', cried Dick. 'The word Boer meant "farmer". The Boers or Afrikaners must be mainly country folk.'

'Even that is changing', said Mr Blackson, smiling. 'They've been coming into the cities so fast in the last twenty years or so, that Afrikaners are hardly a country folk any longer.'

'Oh, look Dad! There's a newspaper seller on the corner', said Dick. 'Shall I get a paper?'

'He seems to have more than one particular paper he's selling', said Mr Wisley. 'Go over and get a selection.'

'Do you really want a selection?' asked Mr Blackson, surprised.

'Might as well get acquainted with your press straight off,' answered Mr Wisley, giving Dick a couple of half-crowns.

Dick rushed up to the African news-vendor as he stood beside his papers, spread in heaps along the kerb.

'Star, sare?' asked the Black man promptly.

'Give me one of each, please', said Dick.

The news-vendor gave him a slightly startled glance, but complied at once. Dick was given nine newspapers and magazines and handed over three shillings in return. As Mr Blackson plunged, into the stream of traffic again, Dick and his father examined their first purchase in South Africa.

As Mr Wisley took up the first five papers his face fell. 'Great Scott, George, don't they publish anything in English in this country?' he cried. Mr Blackson burst out laughing. A quick glance had told him that the papers his dismayed guest held up were called *Imvo*, *Ilange Lase Natal*, *Umteteli Wa Bantu*, *Die Transvaler*, and *Die Vaderland*.

'The first three are Native or African or Bantu language news-

papers', said Mr Blackson. 'The other two are Afrikaans language papers—Afrikaans is what the Afrikaners speak, a sort of simplified Dutch.'

'Here we come to the English papers!' Dick said.

He held up for his father's inspection *The Star*, *The Rand Daily Mail*, *The Golden City Post*, and a magazine called *Drum*.

'The *Star* is our afternoon English paper. It has the biggest daily circulation in South Africa. The *Rand Daily Mail* is our English morning paper', said Mr Blackson.

'And the other two?'

'The *Transvaler* and the *Vaderland* are respectively Afrikaans morning and afternoon dailies.'

'Actually I meant this *Golden City Post* and *Drum*?' said Mr Wisley.

'Oh those! They are a very interesting new development in our press. The *Golden City Post* is a weekly paper, run on the lines of London's popular tabloid papers, but meant mainly for the Natives. *Drum* is a monthly along the same lines. Both are highly successful, with big circulations all over the country.'

'Are they taking readers away from the older English and Afrikaans papers?' asked Mr Wisley.

'No—but they are definitely becoming far more influential than the old Bantu language newspapers. It's very interesting . . .'

'Are the English and Afrikaans papers the same papers published in the different languages?' asked Dick.

Mr Blackson smiled broadly. 'No, they're about as different as their languages, and are published by keen political rivals, too. It's like that in all the bigger centres.'

'This is obviously a country where one keeps on asking questions', said Mr Wisley.

'Ask as many as you like', said his friend, 'but don't jump to any hasty conclusions.'

Dick's attention had been caught by the outside world again. They had swept up a hill and through an area of big blocks of flats and little shops. Soon they had passed out of the central turmoil of the city, and were entering an altogether quieter, pleasanter world. More trees lined the roads, and houses stood in flower-filled gardens. 'We'll soon be home', said Mr Blackson.

## *Chapter 4*

### MEETING THE BLACKSONS

As the houses they were passing grew bigger, the trees taller, the grounds more spacious, Mr Wisley remarked, 'This is something different from what I expected.'

'What did you expect?' asked Mr Blackson.

'Well, only seventy years ago Johannesburg was the world's biggest mining camp, according to my reading. This all looks so settled . . .'

Mr Blackson was obviously pleased, and to hide his pleasure said, 'Of course it's not all like this. There are about two million people spread around the Rand. The Blacks live in vast shantytowns, slummy locations, and model townships. The poorer Whites live in a dozen ugly little industrial areas. But those with more money have managed to make their homes attractive.'

He drove up on to a ridge to show them the better suburbs of Johannesburg spreading away into the distance. Everywhere the eye could reach houses nestled among trees and lawns. Some were elderly double-storeyed buildings, but most were very modern single-storey houses. Here and there rose expensive-looking blocks of flats, standing in their own large grounds. There were even a stream or two and rolling, low hills. Mr Blackson recited the names of suburbs as they looked out upon them.

'There's Houghton and Melrose', he said. 'And over there, Saxonwold, Killarney, Parktown, Melrose, Rosebank, Dunkeld, Inanda, Sandown . . .'

'It all sounds very British', said Mr Wisley.

'Why yes', said Mr Blackson. 'I suppose the great majority of the people living in these suburbs are English-speaking, with either English or Jewish names.'

'What about the Afrikaners? I thought you said they were streaming into the cities', said Mr Wisley.

'They came in mostly as workers. It's only recently that Afrikaners have begun to emerge as industrialists, big businessmen, and

mining magnates', answered Mr Blackson. 'But it was the British and Jews who first built up our modern economy, and they still run most of it.'

'Even the big new gold and uranium mines in the Orange Free State?' asked Dick, who remembered reading that a new Johannesburg was growing up further south.

'Even there', said their host. 'It takes an awful lot of money to open up gold mines. Only the older, more established business groups in the Union can get together the millions and millions required.'

They climbed back into the car again and descended past comfortable homes on their way to the residence of Mr Blackson.

'Is all the gold in the Free State and the Transvaal, then?' asked Dick, as they went along.

'As far as we know, the bulk of the gold, uranium, coal, iron, and so forth is up here', said Mr Blackson. 'There's copper, uranium, and diamonds in the Cape, copper, diamonds, and vanadium in South West, coal in Natal. But there's so much under the South African earth, we're almost getting afraid to look for any more'.

Dick began to understand how so many pleasant suburbs could be built up in so brief a history.

They arrived at Mr Blackson's house after half-an-hour's ride. At first Dick couldn't see much of it because of the high hedge round it which allowed only a glimpse of the steeply sloping slated roof. But as they drove up the side drive past a lawn and rose-garden Dick saw that the house was L-shaped, with a sheltered and raised verandah running round the outside. Deck-chairs and basket-chairs stood about outside and big glass doors opened into the house. A lawn ending in flower-beds and trees came right up to the verandah on one side and a gravel path went along the short side to the vine-covered garage. Higher up was a small swimming-bath.

'The kitchen and the servants' quarters are in the back of the house', explained Mr Blackson as they drove up.

As soon as they stopped Mr Blackson got out and shouted, 'Shilling! Gladstone!' and then explained to the startled Dick, 'Those are the two Zulu boys.'

## MEETING THE BLACKSONS

A moment later the two 'boys' appeared. Both had shiny, black, good-humoured faces and were dressed in short white trousers with red facings and white shirts. Dick would have thought that they were men of twenty-five at least.

'They look very big for boys', Dick said.

'Oh, all native servants are called "boys" if they're men, and "girls" if they're women', Mr Blackson answered. Then he addressed the two men and said, pointing to the Wisleys' luggage, 'Faka lo bags to the stoep and the Missis will tell you where they go next.'

'I understood *half* that order', said Mr Wisley.

'Oh, that's Kitchen Kaffir. "Faka" is a Zulu verb which can mean anything, and "stoep" is the Afrikaans for verandah. It's all a horrible mixture', Mr Blackson added, 'and Gladstone and Shilling would have understood me just as well if I'd said it all in plain English.'

The two black men hearing their names mentioned smiled widely, showing pearly white teeth, and then carried the luggage across.

Just at that moment a tall, rather stout, lady appeared through the front doorway and came hurrying down the steps. This was Mrs Blackson, whom Dick had also met two years before, and she welcomed the Wisleys as if she had been waiting all her life to see them.

'And where have you been all this time, George?' she cried, rounding on her husband. 'I've had tea waiting for hours.'

'We've been sight-seeing', said Mr Blackson.

'Sight-seeing! The idea of it, with two guests in the car whose only desire must have been to have a wash, a cup of tea and to sit down', exclaimed Mrs Blackson. 'But come on in, come on in! I'll try to make up for my husband. I'll show you to your rooms and when you're ready tea will be waiting for you.'

So the good lady bustled them inside, showed them into wide, roomy bedrooms with glass doors opening on to the lawn, and finally ushered them in to tea. Dick found his father examining some furniture with Mr Blackson, while Mrs Blackson presided at a tea-table loaded with a teapot, cups and a large cream cake.



'It's my ambition', Mr Blackson was saying, 'to have all the furniture in the house made of good South African woods. At the moment I've only managed to do out the sitting-room.'

He showed them a well-carved desk and a *riembankie*, a low long stool with the seat made of crossed leather thongs. Both pieces were made of a beautifully grained wood with the disappointing name of 'stinkwood'. The stinkwood tree provided the best furniture wood in the country, Mr Blackson told them. Other furniture woods were mentioned too—*kiaat* and *tambuti*. In the meantime Mrs Blackson handed round tea and at last prevailed upon her husband to sit down.

'Now you must tell us all about what's happening in London', said Mrs Blackson to Mr Wisley. 'What good plays are there? What does the latest fashion look like? Who are they gossiping most about?'

While Mr Wisley did his best to satisfy his hostess's eager interest in London, Dick looked about the spacious sitting-room. Like the bedrooms it, too, opened out on to the lawn but through big sliding-doors of glass, already closed against the gathering chill of the late afternoon. On one wall was a portrait of a black man, a fine head that looked rather like paintings of Elizabethan seamen that Dick had once seen. On another wall was a very colourful still-life of some flowers in a vase. South Africans seemed to like lots of colour, thought Dick, continuing his inspection.

His eye fell on three photographs on the mantelpiece above the broad fire-place. 'Those are the children', said Mrs Blackson 'Alice is at university already, Cecil's in his last year at school but Paul's near your age. Here they come anyway.'

There was a sound of running on the gravel outside, then up the steps and finally into the passage.

'No, cut it out, you big bully!' cried a voice in mock protest.

'Say you're sorry you called me a Marmaduke!' ordered the first voice.

'You called me a Boetie, first!' objected the second.

'Paul! Cecil! Stop ruining my floors and come and meet our guests', cried Mrs Blackson.

There was immediate quiet in the passage and shortly after

## MEETING THE BLACKSONS

wards a small thick-set boy with fair hair and a freckled face came in and grinned shyly at the Wisleys. He was followed a second later by his brother and complete opposite, a tall athletic-looking boy with dark hair and friendly brown eyes. Both boys looked red and hot.

They were introduced and soon afterwards, as Mr Wisley and Mr Blackson started discussing affairs in England, the boys took Dick out into the garden and began to question him eagerly about his air trip. Had he seen the desert, any big game, the Great Lakes, and so on? Did he get very sick? Did he get a chance to visit the pilot at the controls? And though he started a little diffidently he got warmed up after a while and told them all sorts of things he wasn't even aware he had noticed. Even sixteen-year-old Cecil hung on his words.

And finally, when he was pretty well exhausted with answering questions, Paul asked him, 'I suppose you're surprised to find that we're white, aren't you? They say you think we're all black out here, in England.'

Cecil interrupted him. 'Speak for yourself you idiot.' He turned kindly to Dick and said, 'We aren't all ignoramuses like Paul, Dick, and we know you know more about South Africa than that.'

'Well, I knew there'd be white people, of course, but I didn't know much more than that', Dick was forced to admit.

'I don't suppose you can get about much in England on account of the rain keeping you indoors most of the time', Paul said, ignoring his brother.

'Oh, we manage all right, though it does rain quite a lot', Dick answered. 'I suppose it's mostly sunshine in South Africa.'

'Too much sometimes', said Cecil. 'D'you know, there's often no rain for months on end? The farmers lose their crops then, and the town reservoirs get pretty low.'

'We had a big drought last year', Paul said proudly, 'and Mother nearly went mad trying to buy food for us and the boys.'

'But your father told me that there was a thunderstorm regularly every afternoon in summer', Dick said.

'Oh yes, in a good season. Every afternoon thunder rumbles, lightning flashes and big drops of rain fall. By sunset it's very often over', added Cecil. He pointed up at the chimney. 'You see

that little spike sticking out there? That's a lightning conductor to make the lightning strike it instead of the house and lead the electricity into the ground. And those aren't real slates. They're only make-believe ones, because if they were real they'd all be smashed when we have hail-storms.'

'I'm rather glad we've got here in the winter', Dick said.

'Let's play knife-knife before it's dark', said Paul suddenly.

Cecil protested that Dick wouldn't want to play a silly game like that.

'I don't know what it is', said Dick. 'Let's have a go.'

'O.K.', Cecil said looking at the sunset sky, 'but we'll have to be quick. We won't be able to see a thing soon.'

Dick noticed that it was getting chilly, but there seemed to be plenty of daylight left when they started the game. It was a simple game. They each had to throw a pocket-knife into the ground, blade first, from various parts of the hand, and make it stick up-right. By the time Paul decided he had had enough of the game Dick was amazed to find it quite dark and for a moment thought that some clouds must have come up. But in the pale, clear sky a star was struggling to come through.

'There's practically no twilight here or anywhere in South Africa', Cecil explained as they went in in answer to Mrs Blackson's call.

Cecil and Paul went off to do their home-work for the week-end so as to be able to devote the Saturday and Sunday to Dick's entertainment.

When Dick had washed and changed he went back into the sitting-room and found a tall, prettily-dressed girl there reading a book.

'I'm Alice', she said, smiling at him. 'You must be Dick.'

Dick thought she was good-looking, though it seemed to him she used rather a lot of lipstick. She was very easy to talk to. She wanted to know all about his mother and sister, and Dick found that he was eager to talk about them, as well.

So they went on chatting until everybody reassembled and went in to one of the biggest dinners that Dick could ever remember eating.

After coffee in the sitting-room the boys took Dick off to their

## MEETING THE BLACKSONS

'work-room'. It was a big room and had a fire burning in the grate. There were a small carpenter's table and tools belonging to Paul, while Cecil had a museum containing everything from spiders in bottles to stuffed birds. In a cupboard were a deck-quoits set, a cricket bat and stumps and a Rugby-ball, and round the walls were shelves of books.

Dick was taken on a tour of inspection and began by viewing a rather rickety book-shelf which Paul had made. It didn't hold many books but it did admirably for housing Cecil's insect collection. Although some of the butterflies were very beautiful, Dick didn't find South African insects attractive so much as odd. There were trap-door spiders (so-called because they live at the bottom of a small funnel in the earth, lying in wait for insects to stray into it; the funnel has a circular lid of earth, rather like the lid of a coal-hole; ready to fall on the insect when it is inside), and tarantulas, stick-insects which looked like dried twigs, praying mantises with two front legs lifted in front of sinister triangular heads (as if in prayer), and known to the boys as 'Hottentot Gods', brown scorpions with long fearsome-looking tails, butterflies whose wings when shut looked like dried leaves, and many more.

Beginning to feel tired, Dick glanced along the bookshelves to see if there was anything he could borrow before going to bed. He saw many of the usual boys' books any boy in England would have.

'Have you got any South African Books here?' he asked.

'Tons of them', said Paul. 'But mostly about animals.'

'There aren't tons of them,' corrected Cecil, 'but they are mostly about animals.'

He took down three: *Jock of the Bushveld* by Fitzpatrick, the best known South African children's story; *The Story of a Lion Family*, by Pienaar, a famous hunting writer; and *Adoons of the Kalahari*, a story about a baboon by the Hobson brothers.

'South Africans are quite famous for their animal stories', said Cecil. 'We always seem to write a lot about things our ancestors nearly exterminated—like big game and Bushmen.'

He took down three more solid-looking books, *The Reptiles of South Africa*, *The Mammals* and *The Birds*, and began to turn

over the pages. In spite of his weariness, Dick became fascinated by the illustrations. Snakes—mambas, puff-adders, cobras slithered across the pages; birds—veldpoues, secretary-birds, ostriches, horn-bills, sunbirds, honey-birds, eagles, vultures strutted across the veld or soared in the heavens; animals—springbuck, impala, kudus, elands, elephants, meerkats, bush-babies, lions, hippopotami, stood, sprang, and ambled before him.

Suddenly he remembered that he had not yet seen so much as the tip of a single wild animal's tail.

'I suppose I'll see a lot of these animals and things as I go round South Africa with Dad?' he said.

'You'll see plenty of meerkats, spring-hares and hares in the Union, and there are a few ostriches and quite a lot of other birds. You won't see much else, though. Most of the bigger animals have been shot off and you can only see them in game reserves—National Parks we call them.'

Dick was a bit disappointed at this. 'But you'll see them all in the Kruger National Park', Paul told him. 'Dad's going to take you there when you come back again.'

Mrs Blackson's head appeared round the door, and she said, 'It's bed-time for the lot of you. Poor Dick must be dropping with exhaustion, and Cecil, you've got to play your Rugby match to-morrow.'

So Dick was led not unwillingly to his bedroom. At the door Mrs Blackson asked, 'What'll you take for breakfast, Dick? Mealie-meal, Kaffir-corn, oats, or some of those crackly things?'

'Mealie-meal? Kaffir-corn?' Dick said sleepily. 'Can I try one of those?'

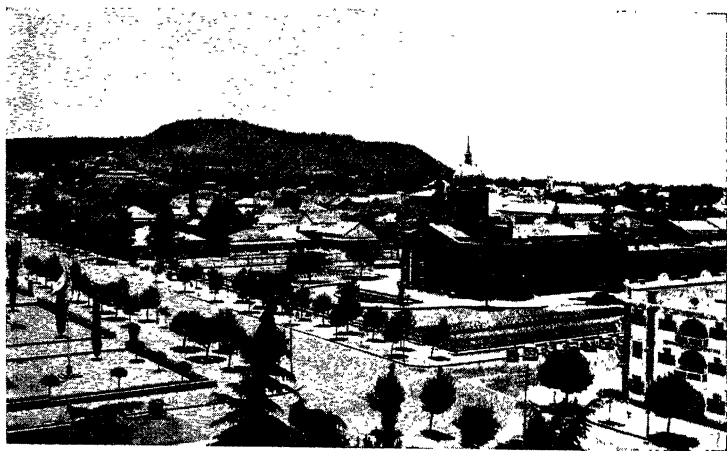
'Take Kaffir-corn', Paul said. 'Mealie-meal isn't so hot.'

So Kaffir-corn it was.

Long after he was in bed, Dick lay with his impressions of the noise of the aircraft, of great yellow hills, black faces and strange names, tall buildings, knife-knife, weird insects, lovely birds and graceful animals getting all mixed up together. To-morrow he would sort it all out—disentangle everything . . . even Boeties and Marmadukes.



ABOVE: *A native miner, thousands of feet below the ground, drilling for gold.*  
BELOW: *Huge tanks of cyanide, used to help separate the gold from the ore.*



*ABOVE: Pretoria. The long, imposing Union Buildings with their twin towers stretch across the hillside on the edge of the town. BELOW: Bloemfontein, capital of the Orange Free State, which Dick thought a nice, solemn, old town.*

## *Chapter 5*

# SCHOOLS FOR EVERYBODY

The rattle of a teacup woke Dick and he found the room lighted by a beam of sunlight and either Shilling or Gladstone smiling at him from the bedside.

'Good morning, little Baas!' said the black man showing his beautiful white teeth in a broad smile.

'Good morning!' said Dick, blinking. 'Are you Shilling or Gladstone?'

'I Gladstone, little Baas', said the other, smiling even more broadly. 'Morning tea and time now seven 'clock.'

After which Gladstone withdrew and, sitting up, Dick saw that the sun was shining through the topmost branches of the hedge. The morning was still quite chilly, however. A moment later Paul came in, dressed in his pyjamas, and sat on the bed talking.

'Paul', asked Dick slyly, 'what's a Boetie or a Marmaduke?'

Paul looked very surprised for a moment and then laughed. 'Oh, you heard us yesterday when we came in. Those are just kind of nicknames chaps at the Boys' High and St Martin's call each other.'

'Are they rival schools then?'

'Not exactly', Paul said. 'The Boys' High is a Government school and St Martin's is a private school run by the Anglicans. Chaps in private schools feel pretty high-class because their parents pay a lot for them to go to school and the chaps in Government schools can go free till they're fifteen. So the Government school chaps call them Marmadukes—a la-di-da kind of name.'

'Paul goes to a Government school', said Cecil, who had just come in, 'and I go to a private school now. Of course most people in South Africa get their education at Government schools. There are quite a lot of big private schools for boys—public schools, I suppose you'd call them in England—like St John's here, the Diocesan School for Boys, or Bishop's in Cape Town, St Andrew's in Grahamstown, Michaelhouse outside Pietermaritzburg and others. Dad says he can't make up his mind which



is better—a Government or a private school—so he sends each of us to a different kind. Paul went to St Martin's prep. school first and I went to a Government primary school. Now Paul's at the Government Boys' High and I'm at St Martin's. (Most of the big private colleges have a prep. school attached.) Mind you, lots of better-off people send their children to the Government schools all the time.'

'Alice wouldn't leave the Girls' High because all her friends were there', Paul said. 'Dad tried for a bit to get her to go to Roedeian or the Dioxegen School for Girls. . . .'

'Diocesan School for Girls, you idiot', Cecil said. Then he went on, 'There are big private schools for girls, too—convents run by Catholic and Anglican nuns, for instance.'

'What about the people who talk Afrikaans?' asked Dick. 'Where do they go to school?'

'Oh, there are what they call Afrikaans medium schools for them. The lessons are all in Afrikaans. There are English medium schools, too, and of course they only teach in English. They're trying to get one subject—in addition to the ordinary language class—taught in English in the Afrikaans schools and in Afrikaans in the English schools. That's to make the two lots of White people—I mean the English and the Afrikaans—able to speak each other's language better.'

'I suppose the Black people have schools which teach in their language, too?' Dick said.

'Oh yes, there are Government schools for them as well, and there are big missionary schools, too', Cecil added. 'But, you know, there are such a lot of natives that they haven't got half enough schools to go round. Besides, the Government doesn't spend such a lot on educating the natives as it does on the Whites.'

'You must have a lot of different kinds of schools', Dick said. 'I suppose you're never short of a team to play Rugby or soccer or cricket against. If you haven't got a private school to play against you've got the local Afrikaans medium school or the native school. . . .'

'Good lord, we wouldn't play with Totties!' Paul cried.

'Black people and Coloured people aren't allowed to mix with the White people, or the Europeans as we call ourselves', Cecil

## SCHOOLS FOR EVERYBODY

said. 'They've got their own schools, same as they have their own reserves, and locations, and there is no mixing. Now the Government's even passed a law that no Afrikaans child can go to an English medium Government school, and no English child to an Afrikaans medium.'

'Cecil's going to an Afrikaans university when he passes his matric. this year', Paul said.

'You can leave school when you're fifteen or when you've passed the last primary class, standard six', explained Cecil, 'but if you want to get a decent job of any sort, or go to a university you've got to get your standard ten, that's matric. or senior certificate. You can choose six or seven subjects from a very wide range for these exams., but generally South African boys and girls take science, maths., English, Afrikaans, history, and something like Latin, or a foreign language, or biology.'

'Are you going to be a doctor or a lawyer or something?' Dick asked.

'No, I'm going to be a farmer', Cecil answered. 'It takes a lot of knowledge to be a farmer anywhere, but particularly in South Africa. I'm going to take my agricultural degree at Pretoria University and run Dad's farm. I'll be pretty good at Afrikaans by the time I'm finished because all lectures are given in Afrikaans at Pretoria University, same as they are in the other big Afrikaans University at Stellenbosch and the smaller places. The English medium Universities are the big ones at Cape Town and on the Witwatersrand, and the smaller ones in Grahamstown and Natal.'

'I suppose you *can* become a doctor by going to a South African university?' Dick said.

'You can become practically anything in the professional line by going to one or other of the universities', Cecil replied. 'You can get a medical degree at Cape Town, Stellenbosch, Witwatersrand, or Pretoria. There's a special Medical School for training non-White doctors that's a part of Natal University in Durban. It's the biggest School of its kind south of the Sahara, I'm told. There's a non-White University, too, in the Eastern Cape, and the Government has plans for others as well . . .'

They heard Mrs Blackson calling and Paul said, 'There's Mother fussing about breakfast.'

## THE YOUNG TRAVELLER IN SOUTH AFRICA

'We'll take you round and show you over the schools this morning, if you like', Cecil said as they went in.

Dick accepted the offer eagerly.

After breakfast the three boys strolled down the quiet, tree-lined road to the main thoroughfare leading into the city. There they caught a red, double-decker bus and rode for about a mile and a half. Finally, in a neighbourhood full of quiet, secluded houses and gardens they came to the main building of St Martin's College, a large, double-storeyed, ivy-covered stone building with many closed windows and an air of being completely deserted.

'Of course there's no school to-day, as it's Saturday', Cecil remarked.

'What sort of long holidays do you get?' asked Dick.

'Well, the longest is nearly two months in December and January. Then some schools have ten days at Easter and Michaelmas and about a month or three weeks from June to July. Others have three terms a year.'

They wandered about in the quiet corridors and peeped into one of the classrooms at the rows of desks and the blackboard with some of the previous day's lesson still chalked upon it. Dick felt he might be walking about in his own school in England. Paul remarked that being so near classrooms and blackboards gave him the 'creeps' so they went out again into the sunlight. They strolled among the trees and gardens in front of the building and then went off to see the field where Cecil was going to play in the Rugby match between St Martin's and the Boys' High that afternoon. Finally they walked across to one of the houses and talked to some of Cecil's friends and had tea with the housemaster. It was a pleasant tea and the housemaster, who had come out from England to teach, asked Dick a great many questions about 'home'.

The Boys' High turned out to be a far less attractive and less secluded place than St Martin's. It had a rather plain, austere appearance and seemed altogether a newer and more bare kind of building. Even its playing field had a balder look than the fields around the private school, but it was built of brick and the classrooms seemed bigger and better lighted than those at St Martin's.

## *Chapter 6*

### PAUL'S OPINIONS AND OTHER AMUSEMENTS

It was very late when they returned home for lunch and the bus they took was crowded with office workers off for the week-end. In fact several buses passed them by, showing the 'bus full' notice and Cecil grew a bit anxious.

While Cecil was getting ready and they were waiting for Alice, who had volunteered to drive them to the match, Dick and Paul pottered about in the garden talking about sport.

'I suppose you know that South Africans are the best Rugby players in the world', Paul said modestly. 'The New Zealanders and the French beat us by a fluke recently. But that's only a passing phase. We call our players Springbucks—I'd rather be a spring-buck than King of England.'

'In England we go in more for cricket and soccer', Dick said. 'And I think they do in Australia as well.'

'Oh, we play cricket and soccer, but we don't concentrate on them like we do on Rugby', Paul said. 'All the biggest crowds go to Rugby out here—the League matches and the Inter-provincial matches. What makes us so good is the size of our players—like Boy Louw and Jan Pickard. Lots of our forwards weigh over two hundred pounds.'

'Mind you', Dick said, feeling he must boost his country a bit in the face of Paul's claims for South Africa, 'Up to a few years ago we'd never been beaten in soccer—not in England, anyway.'

'We don't go in for that so much', said Paul. 'Of course there's lots of other games we play, like hockey, golf, tennis, and then there's fishing, boating and swimming. When I have my holiday in June I'm going to Durban and perhaps I'll meet you there and we'll go surfing together.'

'I don't know how to surf', Dick said.

'Oh, it's easy. I'll teach you in about five minutes', Paul said

and then concluded his list. 'There's a few other things like squash. . . oh, and a new game the Afrikaners play called Jukskei. It's a sort of bowls played with sticks. I saw some chaps up at the Afrikaans Medium playing it. I didn't think much of it.'

They were leaning over the back gate, and when Dick chanced to turn his head towards the house he saw two very respectable-looking Black gentlemen coming towards them. One had on an extremely long, dove-grey sports coat and a green pork-pie hat with a red feather, while the other had on a shorter coat and a cap of a violent check pattern. Both had on brilliant ties and black-and-white shoes. The strangers smiled politely at Dick and said: 'Good afternoon, little Baas!'

Paul turned round and answered, 'Hullo Shilling and Gladstone! You going out now!'

The two Black gentlemen smiled broadly and passed on through the gate.

'Native servants always dress up like that when they're going out', Paul said when the two had gone a little further up the street. 'It's their afternoon off. I suppose they're going to see some friends in one of the locations—Alexandria or Orlando or somewhere. Or perhaps they're going to the Bantu Men's Club or a Kaffir Bioscope or perhaps a nigger Rugby match.'

The two things that impressed Dick most about the match they saw that afternoon were the weather and the problems of loyalty that resulted from having a brother and friends in the rival teams.

The match was played on hard, firm ground, under a cloudless blue sky, and Dick, who was used to seeing the players in England more often than not covered with mud, found this rather odd at first. One of the St Martin's players had been at Paul's school in his first year, and forgetting for the moment that he was now in the rival team, Paul cheered him wildly whenever he seemed to be on the point of making a break, until one of his schoolmates said: 'Hey, Blackson, what are you cheering that guy for? He's on the other side.' The fact that his brother Cecil was also in the rival team made matters still more complicated.

It was a fast, open game and the players seemed to kick into touch more than in England. Finally St Martin's won by 9 to 6,

and Paul didn't know whether to be pleased at his brother's success or disappointed because his school had lost the match!

'Well', said Mr Blackson, who had returned from playing golf with Mr Wisley, as he listened to Paul's garbled story of the match, 'we'll regard it as a purely family victory and we'll all go to the Bioscope to celebrate it. Dick can choose us a picture.'

Dick guessed what 'bioscope' meant and, consulting the big cinema advertisements on the leader page of the evening paper, he chose a picture he had already seen in England and enjoyed. The cinemas had very grandiose names—as all cinemas have—such as the 'Metro', 'Colosseum', and 'Twentieth Century', and Dick found the one they went to just as luxurious as its name, with uniformed commissionaires, usherettes in fancy dress to suit the film, pillared and carpeted lobbies and the big auditorium filled with hundreds of plush seats. The other cinemas, Paul told him, were just as grand.

The following day was Sunday, and they all motored down to visit friends living beside the Vaal River, the Southern border of the Transvaal. They passed through the thriving industrial centre of Vereeniging on the way.

'That's where the Boers and British met to discuss peace terms at the end of the South African War in 1902', said Mr Blackson. 'It was only a little border village then, and South Africa was in ruins.'

It was difficult to imagine South Africa ever having been in ruins as they looked out from the comfortable veranda through the weeping-willow trees and across the broad stretch of the Vaal river. Later the Blackson boys took Dick out speed-boating and fishing. And later still they all motored down beside the river to the big Vaaldam, a great, shining sheet of water covering about fifty square miles, and capable of supplying Johannesburg indefinitely with all the water it required.

As they sped homeward that evening Dick watched the sun set far away across the open rolling country of the Transvaal, tinting the yellow long-grass with pink light. He felt the chill of winter's approach in the air. It seemed to him that instead of having spent little more than a week-end in the Union he had been there all his life.

## *Chapter 7*

# GETTING DOWN TO GOLD

'If I don't show you South Africans doing some work soon', Alice said to Dick one morning after the boys had gone off to school, 'you'll get the impression that it's all play in the Union. So I think I'd better show you Uncle Willie's mine.'

'That's a good idea', said Mr Blackson, who was about to set off with Mr Wisley. 'Take Dick along and show him what makes us tick. Without the mines Jo'burg wouldn't exist—modern South Africa wouldn't exist either, if it comes to that. South Africa would be rather a poor agricultural country full of quarrelling tribesmen and hard-up farmers—and only the baboons would flourish on the mountains. Maybe even they wouldn't be so flourishing either!'

'Do you mean to say your Uncle owns a gold mine?' Dick asked with some awe.

'Well, no', Alice said laughing. 'He's the manager of one. I've only got one lecture this morning and I'll be back to pick you up at ten in Dad's car.'

So Dick found himself once more close to one of the great man-made hills of whitish sand. At ten-thirty he was walking beside Alice across some bare ground at the mine-dump's base towards a number of tin-roofed buildings. The air trembled with the thunder of mighty machinery and in the distance were trucks and engines, chimneys, electric-wire pylons, rows of broad, squat tanks and tall, thinner ones, a clayish slime-dam and pipes and machinery of all descriptions. Everywhere, in the brilliant sunshine and in the shadows of buildings, both Black and White men were at work.

'I suppose when we go down the mine we'll have to climb up to the top of the dump first?' Dick said, not much relishing the idea.

Alice looked puzzled. 'Oh, no. Why?' she said.

'Don't we go down through a hole in the centre?' asked Dick.

## GETTING DOWN TO GOLD

Alice laughed and pointed to the derrick with wheels spinning at the top. The shaft went down below the derrick, she explained, and the discard from mining—which was what the dump consisted of—was carted over to the mine-dump. Dick, who had thought of the dump as a sort of ant-mound with a great hole in the middle, began to re-arrange his ideas.

They had tea with Uncle Willie in the manager's big office. Uncle Willie was a wiry, sunburnt, well-dressed man who moved very quickly, but quietly, and had an air of doing a lot of things at the same time. Finally he pressed a button and in came a very broad, healthy-looking young man. He was a mine-captain, they learnt, and he would be their guide.

As they went along Dick addressed their guide as 'Captain'. The 'captain' turned round, smiling, and said, 'Actually, I'm just plain Mister, or Jack, if you prefer to call me by my Christian name' (of course, they all revealed their Christian names then). 'If we did have titles or ranks the manager would be a sort of mine-colonel', Jack explained, 'and the armchair boys at Corner House would all be mine-marshals. As it is, most of the mine-workers have very unflowery names like shift-bosses, skipmen, onsetters, pipemen, screeners, drill-sharpeners, trammers, pumpmen, timbermen, amalgamators. Then there are a whole variety of miners.'

'There sounds an awful lot of them', Dick said.

'It takes a lot of people to get gold out of the earth', Jack answered. 'There are a few thousand natives and white miners at work thousands of feet beneath us at various levels.'

The idea that they were walking over a huge rabbit warren gave Dick a feeling of insecurity. But it was a very scientifically organized rabbit-warren, Dick realized when Jack took them on a short tour of the surface machinery which provided for the transport and safety of the men underground. Some of the machines they saw were the largest of their kind in the world, like the giant winding drum, which was revolving a great turning circle of steel steps that wound and unwound the hawsers, lowering and raising the skips and cages with their loads of gold-ore and men into and out of the depths. The windlass, with its tremendous driving wheel and its axle as big as a large tree-trunk, made workers standing nearby look like pigmies. Another piece of machinery, reputed to be the



largest of its kind in the world, was the great ventilating fan which drove fresh air down into the mine through the ventilation shafts. The air was cooled by a refrigeration plant which was capable of producing 2,000 tons of ice a day.

'I'd have thought it would be cool enough anyhow, right down there', Dick remarked.

'After a certain depth it gets hotter, as a matter of fact', Jack answered. 'And it's not only to keep people cool that all this air is pumped into the mine. It's also to keep the air down there as clear as possible of the rock-dust caused by the explosions. Once miners nearly always got miners' phthisis from the rock-dust that they breathed in, and hundreds of white and black workers died of it. Pumping air into the mines and other measures, as well as regular medical examinations, have nearly done away with phthisis now. Anyway, after what you've seen, you'll feel you ought to be pretty safe underground, won't you?' Jack said as Dick and Alice changed into gumboots and dungarees. Jack even provided Dick with a miner's helmet which made him feel quite professional.

They went down in an outsize lift, or 'cage', as it was called. It could take over eighty men, Jack told them.

The journey down was rather like travelling on a tube-system standing on its head. They travelled at thirty-five miles per hour, flashing past 'drives' and other electrically-lit departments of the underground organization. At various levels, Jack told Alice and Dick, corridors went off from the shaft into the great gold-bearing reef. As they got further down it really seemed to Dick that he was coming in to land from the air and he had to pinch his nose and blow out his eardrums.

They got out at a shaft-station about four thousand feet down and Jack informed them that they were not half-way to their destination yet. What astonished Dick was to find big machinery at such a depth. There was a sort of baby brother of the big winding-drum above, but it was big enough, for all that. There were also a powerhouse and a first-aid station. Rocksided, wood-propped corridors, lit by electricity, led off into the earth.

Soon they were in a cage again, this time going down a slightly inclined shaft. When they reached six thousand feet below the

## GETTING DOWN TO GOLD

surface Dick learnt that the next part of their journey would be under the level of the sea. For a moment he became almost panic-stricken. He wondered what would happen if the people far away at the top forgot all about them and never came to fetch them again. But when he found himself completing the last stages of his journey in a miniature electric train it seemed too absurd to think that the world could forget such a modern, wonderful place. And from all about him came sounds of human activity, the rumble of the rock-filled cocopans (V-shaped steel trucks) along their rails and the stuttering of steel rock-drills at work.

When they were well over eight thousand feet down Dick noticed that it was a little warmer than further up. They stood on one side to allow some black men to push cocopans of ore past them towards the off-loading points. From there, their loads would be hauled to the surface for treatment. Then Jack led his party along the tram-lines in the corridor towards a 'stope'. The stope, Dick discovered, was a rough shelf running into the rock off the corridor where the ore was actually being mined. Lighting their acetylene lamps Dick and Alice crept and slithered after Jack towards the sound of drilling.

They arrived at last at a point where even the shelf ended and a white miner and his black assistants were engaged in drilling holes into the rock wall. Both the white man and the natives were sweating heavily, but most of all the big black man who lay on his back under the drill, seeming to guide it with his foot. He was naked to the waist and his body glistened in the light of the lamps.

The miner explained to his visitors that he was drilling holes into the rock in order to place charges of explosive in them. When the explosive was in position everybody retired while it went off, breaking down the rock. Dick looked hard at the rock to see if he could spot any gold, but was disappointed. Jack, guessing what he was looking for, remarked that a lot more had to happen to the rock before the gold could be seen easily.

Noticing that Dick glanced with admiration at the gleaming muscles and powerful torso of the big black man with the drill, the miner said, 'That's Jonathan. He's a Zulu.' The black man acknowledged the introduction with a gleam of his white teeth.

As soon as they had got clear of the stope and were able to talk again, Dick asked Alice if most of the 'boys' in Johannesburg were Zulus.

'Certainly not—on the mines', Jack added to Alice's negative. 'There are natives here from all over southern Africa and sometimes beyond. The mines labour recruiting agency looks for labour as far north as Nigeria. But most of the natives come from within the Union—Zulus, Pondos, Xhosas, from their tribal homes in Zululand, Pondoland and the Transkei. There are Shangaans, Sothos and Bacas, too, and numbers of others. A good many come from the British territories in South Africa, like the Basutos and the Swazis, and quite a number from Portuguese East Africa and Rhodesia. It's a long way from some of the native mine-workers' homes to the mines, and great numbers of them trek all the way back after they've worked a year or so and earned sufficient money.'

'Do they all speak English?' asked Dick.

'Not many of them', Jack said. 'We manage to get along with a horrible hotch-potch of English, Afrikaans and the native language known as "Fanakalo". It has one verb which can be made to mean anything, "tshaya". Somehow or another all the complicated processes of goldmining are explained through it. And practically any native in Southern Africa can learn enough of a language in a few weeks to rub along on it.'

When they emerged from the cage into the bright sunshine again Dick discovered that the tour was by no means over. They had to follow the gold ore from the shafthead as it went in trucks to be crushed to a fine sand by the stamps and the tube-mills. Dick had never heard such a din in his life as that which went on in the building where the 2,000 lb. stamps were pounding the rock into pulp, which was afterwards even more finely ground in the tube-mills. The noise was so terrific, far outstripping that of an aircraft, that several remarks Dick bellowed at Alice and Jack went completely unheard and they simply smiled at him in a dim way. They followed the pulp flowing over the corduroy-covered tables, where the finer gold dust was collected between the ribs of the corduroy, ready for washing, and on to the big cyanide tanks and clarifiers. When the waste-product eventually flowed

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into the slime-dam there appeared to be no gold left—not even enough to fill a small hole in a tooth.

The most thrilling part of the surface tour was the visit to the furnaces, where liquid gold was cast into gold bars. It was with great respect that Dick looked at a bar of metal worth £7,750. Jack informed him that about twenty such bars were produced each month from the output of 100,000 tons of rock. The gold bar looked ridiculously small to be the final product of such a great amount of work, organization and machinery, let alone the mass of broken rock.

‘Where does the gold go?’ asked Dick when they were having lunch in Uncle Willie’s big house on the mine.

‘They say’, Uncle Willie remarked with a smile, ‘that we dig it out of one great hole in the earth and it eventually gets sold to the Americans who bury it in another great hole in the earth—under their big Central Reserve Bank. It gets there via the Bank of England, and helps to strengthen our sterling money area.’

‘It’s the biggest gold-mining industry in the world, isn’t it, sir?’ asked Dick.

‘It’s certainly the most highly organized, and goes down to the deepest levels—one mine goes down to 12,000 feet now’, said Uncle Willie. ‘But last year when we claimed to have produced £200 million worth of gold, the Russians said that they had produced £225 million worth. So whether we’re still the world’s greatest producers, I don’t know. But we’ve produced 17,000 tons of gold since we started in 1886, and earned about £3,000 million with it.’

‘And now there’s uranium as well’, said Alice.

‘Now there’s uranium as well’, agreed Uncle Willie.

‘We’ve got the world’s biggest known reserves of that, about a billion tons of ore. Thirty-two gold-mines are also producing uranium today, and it’s already bringing in about £50 million a year. So that if the world does blow itself up eventually we will have supplied it with a great part of the wherewithal to do it. On the other hand, if the world manages to put atom-power to peaceful uses, we will be one of the great suppliers of easily splittable atoms, uranium, the fuel of the future.’

‘I didn’t see any uranium being produced’, said Dick.

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Uncle Willie laughed. 'We're still being a bit secretive about it', he said.

'Anyway,' he added, 'we've got enough stuff in our bit of earth to keep our 40 thousand White miners and 300 thousand Black ones busy for a long time yet.'

Later as Dick followed Alice into one of Johannesburg's many smart coffee-bars, his head was still whirling with the huge figures Uncle Willie had poured into it so casually. He sat down and looked about him, at the smart women passing, at the ceaseless movement of bright big American cars, at the shining shop-windows and tall new buildings everywhere. And he kept thinking, 'Without those huge figures none of this would be here.'

It was an idea that came to haunt him during the rest of his stay in the city. It recurred to him at odd moments as he went on expeditions around Johannesburg with Alice or in the company of Cecil and Paul. There were many of these expeditions. One took him to that white marble edifice, the Magistrates' Courts, where Alice had to give evidence in a robbery case which had occurred at their neighbours' house. 'Jo'burg's full of thieves', said Alice, 'and pay-roll robbers too.' In the courts lots of patient, quiet Black folk waited around in dimly lit corridors to give evidence or pay the fines of relatives in trouble. 'Most of the crimes are committed by African people, because there are so many more of them and they are so much poorer than the Whites', said Alice.

But most of the time Dick went to more cheerful places. Once he went to Broadcasting House, the headquarters of the South African Broadcasting Corporation. He saw studios, microphones, peeped through a glass screen at an announcer 'on the air', looked in on the Corporation's Symphony Orchestra practising for a concert. ('We haven't got television yet', said Cecil. 'I don't know why.') Dick went to the theatre twice, once to a large modern theatre built by the Reps., in a suburb near the centre of things, and another time to a smaller, cosier theatre in the middle of the city, called 'The Brooke'. He wandered into the big-pillared main building of the University, visited the Chamber of Mines' Medical Research Institute, inspected the big and airy public library, lying at the top of imposing steps in the middle of a big square

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in the heart of Johannesburg. It was there he visited the war museum, and the Africana museum, full of all sorts of objects from South Africa's past, from whole mail-coaches to eighteenth century ladies dresses. He even saw a room in which the famous Field Marshal Smuts's study, desk, chairs, and shelves of books, was reconstructed as it had been on his farm at Irene thirty miles away. It was kept just as it had looked the day the world-renowned ex-Prime Minister of South Africa died in 1950.

Dick never seemed to stop moving about. He seemed to become as hurried as the Johannesburgers themselves. Sometimes he just went on shopping expeditions with Mrs Blackson, and he never really tired of wandering through the many crowded departmental stores watching the busy White shop-assistants (all shop assistants were White). Other times there were outdoor excursions to the Zoo or Zoo lake. And once he did something he wasn't very enthusiastic about—he visited the National Art Gallery in Joubert Park.

But always, at odd moments, wherever he was, Dick would find his thoughts returning to two people. The one would be Uncle Willie, sitting working with figures in his big office; and the other would be glistening Jonathan the Zulu guiding the rock-drill thousands of feet below the busy pavements and tall buildings. Once when the ground of the city shook in a mild tremor, Dick had a quick vision of men staring in alarm in all those miles and miles of lighted passages which honey-combed the earth deep under all Johannesburg. And again he thought, well, without all those hundreds of subterranean tunnels, without all those Uncle Willies and those many more Jonathans, Johannesburg wouldn't be there today. The veld would still be bare and wild, as it was less than a hundred years before.

## *Chapter 8*

# ANOTHER SIDE OF JOHANNESBURG

The first breakfast Dick had had with the Blacksons had been memorable for two things at least: Kaffir-corn porridge and a conversation he had had with Alice arising indirectly out of it.

The Kaffir-corn porridge was a dark-brown colour.

'Same colour as a Kaffir', Paul said.

'What a little democrat you are, Paul!' said Alice coming in on the heels of this remark. 'Always ready with some bad old name like Kaffir or Nigger or Tottie for the Bantu.'

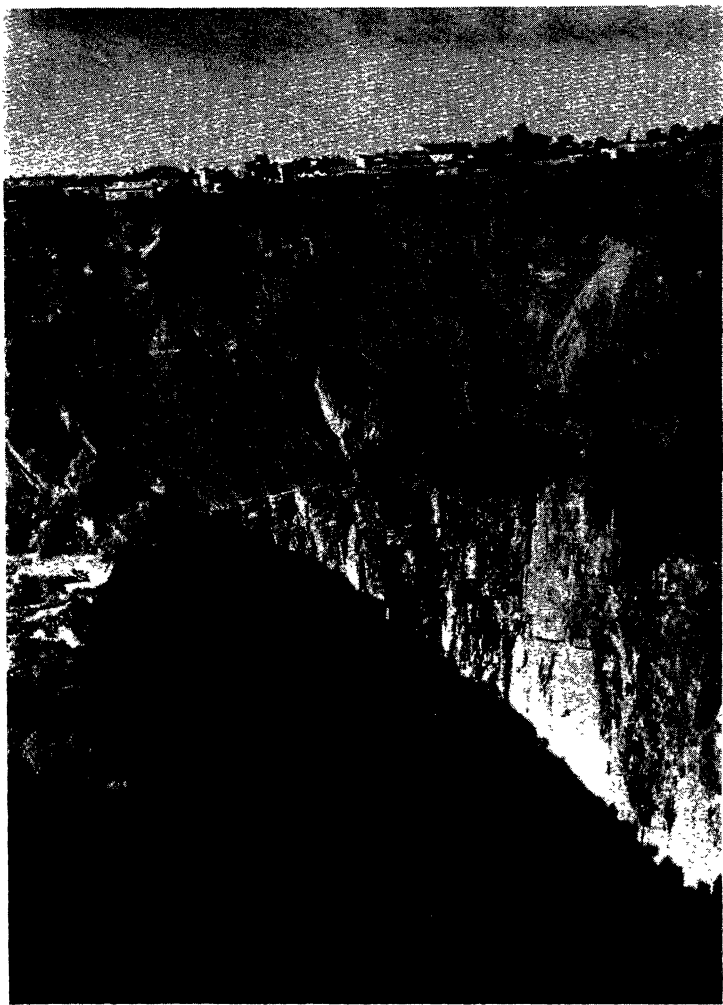
'Alice thinks the Nigs are the same as we are and she wants to marry one one day', Paul said teasingly.

'Delightful person!' said Alice good-humouredly, sitting down. 'Don't pick up Paul's attitude to the Bantu, Dick, it's as behind the times as the Kaffir wars of the last century. The better kind of people in the country don't talk about Niggers, Totties or Kaffirs any more, but of Bantu or Africans—a race of human beings who are becoming civilized a little later than ourselves, that's all. Some of them are already a lot more civilized than some white people in the country, and many more will be soon if we give them the proper chances.'

As Dick liked Paul he didn't want to appear to take Alice's criticism of her brother too seriously and so he began to eat his Kaffir-corn. It had a faintly nutty flavour.

The irrepressible Paul went on, however. 'Old Alice is so fond of the Nigs she even eats mealie-meal.'

Dick looked up and saw that Alice was eating a white-coloured porridge. 'This is made from maize, or mealies as we call it', Alice explained. 'What my infant brother means by his feeble joke is that the Bantu people in South Africa depend on mealie-meal in much the same way as white people depend on wheat and bread—only they depend on it more because they've got less of other



*The biggest man-made hole in the world. In this cavern, 3,600 feet deep and nearly a mile round the top, the Kimberley diamond-miners burrowed for riches.*





*The Devil's Peak, looking down on Cape Town University.*

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things to eat. At least it's true of the people living in the native reserves, though I can't speak absolutely for the locations and compounds.'

'What are compounds?' Dick asked.

'I'll show you one sometime', Alice said.

When they were leaving Uncle Willie's mine Alice slowed the car down and said, 'There's a compound.'

Dick saw what looked to him very much like barracks for soldiers. There were blocks of rooms arranged round a big central square, and at the entrance to the buildings was standing a uniformed Bantu policeman. There were other buildings too, which looked like halls and big kitchens. There were one or two trees and the place seemed to be very clean. Alice explained that this was one of the many compounds where the Bantu mine-workers on the Rand lived and were fed—and to a certain extent were entertained. Some compounds were fairly small, housing only about a thousand workers; others were much larger, containing as many as five thousand, and generally divided into different sections for the different tribes to prevent their fighting with one another. There were Government regulations to ensure that the natives were fed and housed properly, and the mine-owners took good care to see that their workers were kept in good health. Generally mine-workers now left the mines fatter and healthier than when they arrived.

'There is a snag, of course', Alice remarked. 'All these men in the compounds live away from their families—sometimes for years. The real trouble is not about the compounds themselves, but what is going on in the native territories where the men come from. While they're living here, their farms and families are being neglected.'

'Why don't they have their wives and families here?' Dick asked.

'Well, I've got to drop a parcel for Shilling at his uncle's house in one of the locations, and you can see for yourself what living in town means to a native family.'

After they had driven some distance Dick noticed the houses round about growing shabbier and shabbier until they finally arrived in a wilderness of shanties and mean little dwellings,

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mostly in a dilapidated condition. Washing flapped in the tiny backyards and children crowded noisily in the dirty streets. Everywhere Bantu people stood about in the roads arguing, talking, laughing. Everything round them had a cramped, filthy, ramshackle appearance. Many of the dingy little dwellings had an air of respectability, as if, in spite of everything, they were determined to have some self-respect. But by far the greater number of the dingy houses looked overcrowded, dirty and uncomfortable.

'Surely this isn't part of Johannesburg?' Dick cried, shocked at the ugliness, bareness and poverty all around him.

'Johannesburg is responsible for it and so is the rest of South Africa—just as everybody in England is responsible for the slums in your big cities', Alice remarked. 'The big difference is, of course, that you live in the slums in England if you're too poor to live anywhere else. In South Africa, if you're black and want to live in a city, whether you're poor or not, you must live in a location. As things are now you haven't much prospect of living anywhere else unless you go back to the Reserves.'

'But can't the black people make their locations any better?'

'That's another difficult question', said Alice, 'but you must remember that the Bantu workers don't get much in the way of wages and there are many kinds of work which they are not allowed to do, mainly the higher-paid jobs. That is part of what is known as the "Colour Bar". So they haven't got much money to spend on improving their houses.'

'Look at that strange chap over there! He's so cold he's got a blanket wrapped round him', Dick said pointing to a Bantu walking along in a brightly coloured blanket.

'No, that blanket only means that he has recently arrived from the Reserves where blankets are the normal kind of dress', Alice said. 'Hundreds and hundreds are now coming in from the Reserves to look for work. Labour bureaux are trying to limit and organize the flow.'

'What are these Reserves you talk about?' asked Dick.

'They are the old countries where the White man found the Black people living when he started moving into South Africa', explained Alice. 'Zululand, Pondoland, Tembuland, Sekukuni-land, and so on. There the various tribes live under their own

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chiefs, and in their own little villages of round mud huts.'

'Why don't they stay there instead of coming to this?' said Dick, flinging out his arm at some horrible hovels made of paraffin tins which had been beaten flat.

'Why didn't we all stay blue-painted Britons?' Alice asked in return. 'Even this squalor represents adventure, an advance in civilization to the raw tribesman.'

'I see', said Dick, and contemplated the advance in civilization they were passing.

'Of course, I'm showing the worst side of this housing problem', continued Alice. 'All over South Africa the city authorities are building model housing schemes for the African people.'

Dick and Alice handed Shilling's parcel in at the door of a small, two-roomed house. A shy, twelve-year-old girl holding a fat, solemn, black baby on her hip came out to them. She took the parcel with her free hand, explaining that her mother was away at work. Dick looked past her into a dingy little room and saw a rickety table, a few sticks of chairs, and a picture of Queen Elizabeth on the wall. The place smelt of poverty and wood-smoke.

'In the cities both the fathers and mothers of most African families have to go out to work to get enough for their children's food and education—if they can get them into schools', said Alice as they drove away. As if to show what some did who could not get into schools a line of laughing children came dancing past led by one playing a shrill cheerful tune on a penny-whistle.

Alice drove on for a long way until they came at last to a place filled with rows and rows of neat, well-spaced little houses. The monotonous orderliness of everything was made bearable by the lively figures of African children and women moving excitedly about the streets and bare little gardens.

'It all seems far away from everything', Dick said, feeling depressed.

'That's all part of the Government's plan to group the Bantu people together in good houses, but as far apart from the Whites as possible', said Alice. 'The Government says it's the first stage to moving these folk back to the Reserve altogether eventually.'

They drove back home, mostly in silence.

## *Chapter 9*

# PRETORIA, PRESIDENTS AND PRIME MINISTERS

One of Dick's expeditions with Alice took him to Pretoria, about thirty miles away by road. She was driving a friend's car over to the capital, and they travelled along a road of beautifully kept tarmac that ran between blue-gums, fir-trees and wattle-trees all the way. Sometimes it went dead straight for miles, crossing neat bridges, rising up a long swelling slope or curving down towards a rivulet that ran over flat, round-edged boulders. Beyond the trees the Transvaal highveld rolled into the distance covered, where the land wasn't ploughed, with the withering long-grass. Country residences, farmhouses, and windmills were frequent sights along the way, and hidden among trees were a couple of open-air cafés.

The country became prettier as they came nearer to Pretoria. But what Dick noticed in particular, while they were still quite a long way off, was a great squarish building, on top of a hill, outlined against the sky. 'That's the Voortrekker Memorial,' said Alice, 'to commemorate the Afrikaner pioneers who first opened up the interior of South Africa for the White people.'

'Did the other Whites send them?' asked Dick.

'Hardly', said Alice. 'You could say the Great Trek was started to get away from other Whites.'

Alice turned off the main road and went up the hill. On its top, reached by a great flight of steps, stood the granite memorial, 130 feet high, ringed by a circle of stone wagons.

'It looks like a fortress', said Dick as they went up the stone steps.

'A ring of wagons was the old Trekkers' fortress. From inside they used to shoot down the yelling hordes of Shangaans, Zulus, and Matabeles who attacked them', said Alice.

Each of the four corners of the heavy square structure inside

the wagons was guarded by a huge bearded figure of an old pioneer or republican staring out over the veld. Inside, in a cathedral-like solemnity under a vast dome, were fine long friezes, excellently done, showing the clash between Bantu tribesmen and advancing Voortrekkers. The friezes traced Trekker history up to the founding of the little Boer republics.

'But who were the Voortrekkers, Trekkers, and Boers?' asked Dick.

'All the same people', said Alice. 'The Great Trek is so important to us, I forgot it was very insignificant to you. Yet it gave English a new word—*trek*. However, it's not half so important to the world as American pioneers going West in their "prairie-schooners"—yet the Great Trek was much the same sort of thing, and the trekkers had fleets of tented wagons too. When the Dutch first came in 1652 their colonists slowly spread eastwards across the Cape Colony in a series of little treks. But when the British came, in 1800, the East Cape was in a very troubled state because the Batnu people coming down the east side of the continent and the Boers—the trekking Dutch colonists, that is—coming from the West, had met there. Things got worse and worse and finally about 2,000 Boer men, women and children crossed into the unknown north in tented wagons determined to find some peaceful land of their own, out of reach of British interference, and rule themselves. So the Great Trek began, and in the end it opened up the unknown interior of South Africa for the white man to live in.'

'So they were the ones to discover gold and diamonds?' Dick said.

'No. They were God-fearing cattle-farmers who wanted little else but to be left alone, to read their only book, the Bible, and to have sufficient pastures for their herds', Alice went on. 'In fact, they were not interested in gold and diamonds, and trouble started for them, as they feared it would, from the moment these minerals were found. They had founded Republics of their own at the end of the struggles with the Zulus and other natives. When the rush for gold and diamonds started it looked as if the "foreigners"—large numbers of them British—who came pouring in would soon outnumber the Boers in the land they (the Boers, that is) had fought and suffered so much to get. Quarrelling started soon over the vote, between the Boers under Paul Kruger

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on one hand and the foreigners, who had come for gold and diamonds, under Cecil Rhodes on the other. That was how the Boer War began.'

By then they had moved out and down the steps again. Standing for a moment Alice pointed out the Union's main training base, Voortrekkerhoogte, a little township in itself. She also pointed out the nearby amphitheatre in which national celebrations were sometimes conducted, into which 250,000 people had squeezed themselves once.

Then they went on down the long hill into Pretoria.

'Hope I never go in there', said Alice with a shudder as they drove past a big, castle-like brick building.

'What's that?' asked Dick.

'That's the Central Gaol. They hang all our murderers there. And the really bad prisoners are locked up there too.'

A little lower down they passed Defence Headquarters. It had an absurd little clock-tower trying to look imposing over three broad storeys of Offices. Further on a long brick building came in sight.

'Wish I had all the money they can produce there', said Alice.

'Doesn't look much like a bank', said Dick.

'No, it's the Mint.'

Along the sides of the roads stood bare and withered trees. Dick remarked that they looked rather scrawny. But Alice said that during the later part of the year they would become the most beautiful trees imaginable. Each became almost a floating mist of mauve blossom. They were called jacarandas—and every year Pretoria has a Jacaranda Festival.

'And a local regiment called the Pretoria Highlanders gets a beautiful nickname from this tree', said Alice. 'They're called the Jacaranda Jocks.'

The buildings were beginning to grow higher and more modern round them. Soon they came to a sort of central whirlpool of traffic in which at least a dozen trolley buses were moving in circular procession clicking and crackling their antennae on the overhead wires. But the traffic only made a ring round a great stretch of green grass, cut into four quarters by broad crossing footpaths. And at the exact centre of the Square—Church Square,

it was called—stood an arresting statue of a bearded old gentleman in a top hat. Four other figures of bearded men, in slouch hats with bandoliers slung around their chests and rifles in their hands, crouched around the base of the central statue.

‘That’s Paul Kruger’, said Alice. ‘The last President of the old Transvaal Republic before the Boer defeat in the South African War ended it. Those are Boer commando-soldiers guarding him.’

Dick went close and looked up into the broad, grim, but shrewd features of the old Boer leader. The statue seemed to be looking far over the heads of present crowds.

‘He was a fine old man’, said Alice. ‘I’m glad he stands in the centre of the city.’

‘They call Pretoria the City of the Voortrekkers’, Alice went on, ‘and Paul Kruger—Oom Paul, they call him—went along with the Trek at the age of twelve. All the long time he was President he stayed here. When he died in exile—in Europe, for he would not live under the British in a conquered republic—his remains were brought back to be buried here. His spirit still seems to brood over parts of Pretoria, just as that of his old enemy, Cecil Rhodes, still seems to brood over the slopes of Devil’s Peak in Cape Town.’

Dick looked round in the thin sunshine at the large buildings lining the square, the Post Office, the Reserve Bank, the Palace of Justice, the Standard Bank, Barclays Bank—and a big barn-like building fronted by two palm trees. Alice pointed to it.

‘That is one of the only buildings round the square that Paul Kruger would remember’, she told Dick. ‘That was his Parliament, the old Raadzaal, that the Boers tried to prevent getting swamped by new immigrant or Uitlander voters. It was there that the flag of the republic was hauled down for the last time when the British took Pretoria.’

She fell silent for a moment, then added: ‘The Afrikaners now call the Boer War, or South African War, the Second War For Freedom. And today South Africa keeps a public holiday in Paul Kruger’s honour.’

In their car again, Dick and Alice passed out of Church Square down Church Street, though Dick could see little evidence of churches. It was one of the longest streets in South Africa, Alice told him. They passed the usual large central shops and came to a



wide cobbled market-place. All round the edges Indians had busy little stalls and shops, and other Indians loaded lorries and horse-drawn carts with produce. A little further on they were just about to cross a small iron-balustraded bridge when Alice drew in the car to the side of the road and told Dick to come and look at the Apies River.

'Winston Churchill is said to have swum this river when he was escaping from the prisoner-of-war camp in Pretoria after the Boers had captured him in the Boer War', Alice said.

Dick looked down, rather puzzled, at the little trickle of water flowing at the bottom of a great concrete furrow.

'As a matter of fact, it might have been quite a hefty torrent at the time Sir Winston swam across it', Alice said, 'for a lot of South African rivers, which are bone-dry or just miserable trickles like this, swell up to broad floods during rainy seasons. That's why you see these big concrete embankments on either side of what is now a tiny stream.'

They passed more shops and hotels and finally came to an area which consisted, according to Alice, of jacaranda trees and big and little boarding-houses full of civil servants. Alice went on to explain that Pretoria generally, being the seat of the Government, was full of Government offices and civil servants. And as she was talking they came to the end of the buildings along the left-hand side of the road and Dick found himself staring up over lawns and flower-beds, trees and terraced gardens at an imposing grey building stretching across the hillside. The building consisted of two long but massive wings, each pillared at either end. Above the semi-circle of stone steps leading to the offices that joined the wings rose two slender grey towers.

'Those two towers are supposed to represent the coming together of the two white races of the country in Union', Alice remarked. They had at last reached the front of the big building by means of a side road through the beautifully laid-out gardens. 'These are the Union Buildings, as you probably know. They started on them in 1910 at the time of Union. When England and the Boer Republics finished fighting about who should get the vote in the Transvaal the country was in a terrible state. About a third of the number of Boers who had started off to fight the war

were left at the end and many of their women and children had died in concentration camps from disease. Britain very generously gave a great deal of money to build up the lives of what was left of the Boer people again, and England encouraged the four English Crown Colonies there were then in South Africa to unite and become independent. After the disasters of the past ten years, Union in 1910, arranged by a majority of Boer representatives, seemed to promise a wonderful future of friendship and happiness for the country. These buildings were put up to represent that optimistic spirit.'

'This is more or less the same as the Houses of Parliament in England, then', Dick said as they walked up the steps.

'Oh, no—more like Whitehall!' said Alice. 'The House of Parliament is in Cape Town, the Union's other capital.'

'Oh, of course, I'd forgotten about the other capital', said Dick.

'Well, when they discussed Union in 1909, everybody was so eager to get things settled and live in friendship that when they found they couldn't get agreement on where the capital of the new State was to be, they decided to have two capitals—one where they passed laws, and another where they put the laws into operation', Alice explained. 'And if you count Bloemfontein, the seat of the Supreme Court, as yet another capital, then there's a third place where they punish the people who don't obey the laws passed and put into operation by the other two capitals. Natal, which didn't get a share of the capitals, is still rather sore and talks about being overlooked and wanting to be a separate State on its own.'

They walked round inside the building, along the wide corridors and past rows and rows of offices. Different sections were devoted to different departments of State like the Department of Interior, the Department of Native Affairs, the Prime Minister's Office, and so on. There was rather an empty feeling about the building, but Alice explained that that was because many of the heads of departments and all the ministers were away in Cape Town attending the session of Union House of Assembly, the correct title for Parliament in South Africa.

'Oh, so we shan't see the Prime Minister, then', Dick said, a

little disappointed because from what Alice had said he had half hoped to catch a glimpse of him.

'No. He's down at Cape Town guiding his ministers in the House during the big debate about money or natives or UNO, I'm not certain which one it is at the moment', Alice said.

But she took Dick along and showed him the Prime Minister's office door, or at least the door to the office of the Prime Minister's Secretary, who barred the way of visitors to the Head of State.

'Since Union', Alice said, 'we have had six Prime Ministers. All have been Afrikaners, and four of them have been Nationalists. The Nationalists stand mainly for the rights and independence of the Afrikaners, and to carry on the traditions of the old republics.'

'Why don't the English or the Bantu produce any Prime Ministers?' asked Dick.

'Well, the Africans are represented by only three members in our House of Assembly—and their representatives must all be White people', Alice explained. 'The Nationalists think even that is too much. They want the Africans to develop Parliaments of their own and rule themselves in their own little states—what we now call the reserves. They don't want the African people to come and outvote—or even share power with—the White people in what are called the White areas.'

'It's what they call *Apartheid*, isn't it?' asked Dick.

'Yes, the policy of keeping Black and White *apart* to avoid racial quarrelling', said Alice.

'I see', nodded Dick. 'And the English? What about them?'

'Their case is different', Alice went on. 'There have always been fewer English-speaking people than Afrikaners. So the English voters follow a moderate Afrikaner leader who can attract Afrikaner votes as well, and look after English and Afrikaner interests equally. General Smuts was one of these, the only man who has so far become Prime Minister twice. He became a world figure, one of the founders of both the League of Nations and U.N. He was a firm supporter of the Commonwealth, and such a friend of England that the Afrikaners said he had forgotten his own people altogether. That's why they voted him out of office in 1948, shortly before he died. But I think he was the greatest South

African who ever lived, and I still support his old Party, the United Party.'

'But what do the Nationalists want to do with the English-speaking South Africans? Put them in separate states too?'

Alice laughed. 'Some English suspect so. The real aim of the Nationalists is to turn the English-speaking South Africans into English-speaking Afrikaners. That is, they want the English to be whole-hearted citizens, with equal language rights, of a modernized form of an old Boer republic.'

'Why can't they stay English speaking South Africans?' asked Dick, puzzled.

'As they are, most English-speaking South Africans still like having a Queen or a King', Alice said patiently. 'But the Nationalists say that this makes them more loyal to the English monarch than they are to South Africa. The English, of course, say this is nonsense, and that the Nationalists are more loyal to a section of the Afrikaners than to the country as a whole.'

They stood for a while looking out from the broad stone terrace outside the Union Buildings. Pretoria stretched away into the distant wooded hills. Innumerable little square parks and gardens broke up the tree-lined blocks of houses. The further eastwards one looked the more the city seemed to become embedded in gardens, trees and shrubberies. To the west the city shaded off into the harsher lines of the industrial quarter bounded by the immense cooling-towers of the Iscor Steel Works. And more distantly and remotely the Voortrekker Monument brooded against the deep blue sky-line.

'The Nationalists say that the English won't have much to complain about in the new republic', Alice remarked. 'It will still probably be in the Commonwealth, have an English parliamentary system, and its national games will be Rugby and cricket.'

At last Dick said, 'You know, Alice, you haven't told me what's going to happen to all the mines and factories and lorries when they've put the Black people into their separate states.'

Alice made no answer until they were on the way to her friends, the van Stadens. 'You must ask the van Stadens your question', she said as they drove along. 'They're Nationalists.'

## *Chapter 10*

### A VISIT TO THE VAN STADENS

Dick was rather nervous of this particular visit. He feared that the van Stadens might be actively hostile to him as a visitor from England. But pretty, young-looking Mrs van Staden welcomed them with open arms, kissed Alice heartily, and spoke nothing but English, with only the faintest trace of an accent. Later Mr van Staden, a lithe, sandy-haired man with blue eyes, came home for lunch from the government office of which he was head. He too, gave Alice a hearty kiss and welcomed Dick warmly, speaking nothing but English.

Mr van Staden quickly noticed Dick's interest in the South African paintings hung on the walls. He immediately took him round the house showing him paintings that the van Stadens had collected over the years. When they came to a picture of a big strange-looking tree called a baobab under a sky with clouds towering into the blue, Mr van Staden said, 'That's by old Pierneef. He's dead now. And over there is one by Irma Stern—she's really got something to tell us about Africa', he added, showing a vivid portrait of an East African Arab.

Rapidly Dick viewed works by Maggie Laubsher, Maud Sumner, Terence McCaw, Cecil Higgs, Gregoire Boonzaaier, Alexis Preller, François Krige. All of them seemed to have captured the strong sunlight and many colours of South Africa. There was also a strange little African figure carved by Moses Kottler.

Mr van Staden paused reflectively before a painting by an African artist, Gerard Sekoto. 'Too bad this fine painter has gone to Paris to be a Black Frenchman. He should have stayed here and drawn strength from his own people', he said.

At this moment a plump Black maid appeared. 'The Missis says the Master must come for lunch', she said.

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At lunch it was decided that Dick and Alice would stay over for the night and see the new National Theatre show.

Again when the five younger van Stadens came straggling home from school soon after lunch, each one of them seemed able to chatter away in English to Dick as easily as they could talk in their own language, Afrikaans. They were very bright, energetic children. Dick made special friends with Dirkie, a boy of his own age.

'Listen,' Dirkie said as they wandered round the large garden, 'I've got to go with my school class on a visit to the Steel Works. You come with me.'

And so, with a chattering crowd of boys and girls of the Afrikaans Medium school, Dick rode in a bus to the industrial west end of the town. The school teacher made Dick very welcome to his class for the afternoon, and there was no need for Dirkie's services as interpreter for, as they started off with their guide on the tour of Iscor, the teacher remarked, 'In honour of our temporary class-mate from overseas we will turn this class into an English lesson'. Dick had already been over a steel works in England, so the great cauldrons of glowing liquid-iron and the moulds and the white bars of hot steel were nothing new to him. But he enjoyed the trip nevertheless.

That evening before supper the young van Stadens had a sing-song, the eldest boy strumming the tunes on the piano. The songs they sang were taken from a thick book of Afrikaans songs called a 'Sangbundel'. Many of the tunes Dick had heard before, among them quite a few English and Scottish airs put to Afrikaans words, but all were lively and lilting and good-humoured. There was *Sarie Marais*, the song of a Boer soldier homesick for his girl in the far Transvaal; *Gertjie*, the song of a girl asking a tardy fiancé when they were going to get married; *Alabama*, a song made up by the Cape Malays to celebrate the visit to Cape Town during the American Civil War by an American frigate which used to go about the high seas sinking Northern ships for the South. Some of the songs were simply jingles meant to jig to.

Then Dirkie and his elder brother sang for Dick a song of their own composition in English, explaining that practically every self-respecting South African has his own version of this song.

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It went,

'I had a wife, her name was Sarah  
(*Vat jou goed en trek!*)\*  
And she ran off with Jan Ferreira  
(*Vat jou goed en trek!*)

CHORUS

*'Swaar dra al op die een kant,  
Swaar dra al op die een kant,  
Swaar dra al op die een kant,  
Jannie met die hoepel been.*

And so on with the interpolations and chorus throughout,

'Ugly thing, I couldn't bear her  
And I felt sorry for Ferreira . . .

'Back next day came Jan Ferreira  
"Forgive me, friend! Take back your Sarah! . . ."

"Oh, I'll forgive you, Jan Ferreira,  
But from her love I couldn't tear her! . . .

"Nothing can than that be fairer  
*So vat jou goed en trek, Ferreira . . .*"

The sing-song put Dick in the right mood for the play. This was *The School for Scandal*. It was performed at the pleasant little Pretoria Opera House by the English company of the National Theatre Group. This group was subsidized by the State to tour South African cities and *dorps* with a play in English and one in Afrikaans several times a year. As the scheme got established there might be more than one play in each language on the roads, Mr van Staden told Dick. Theatre in South Africa had been greatly stimulated by two local English touring companies during the war when films had been hard to get. National Theatre had originally been organized by André Hugenet, who had kept the theatre alive among the Afrikaners for twenty years, continuously touring the towns of the *platteland* (countryside) and little out-of-

\* "Take your things and go, Ferreira !"

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the-way centres where entertainment was hardly known. Interest in theatre in South Africa was growing steadily, Mr van Staden added. Even the Cape Coloured people were developing their great interest in music and drama through their Eoan Group.

The following day Alice decided that she and Dick might as well complete their tour of Pretoria. Mr van Staden said that if they would drop him at his office and his daughter at the Children's Art Centre, they could have the car for the day.

'I should have thought that the van Stadens would speak Afrikaans at home', Dick said to Alice as they were driving along.

'They do usually', Alice answered. 'But it's a custom of better-educated Afrikaners to speak the language of the guest in their house if they can. Afrikaners are really very good linguists and many of them speak French and German as well as English, Afrikaans, and Dutch.'

Their day was a very full one, for there were so many things to see in Pretoria and just outside it. They first paid a visit to the modest, very ordinary, corrugated-iron-roofed house that was Paul Kruger's residence while he was President of the Transvaal. It was now a museum in his memory and it contained many relics of his Presidency. From there they went to the big, well-wooded zoo and Dick had his first view of lions in South Africa—a magnificent pair, safely behind bars. 'I'll show you something about lions', said Alice. She took a small bottle of scent from her hand-bag, sprinkled some on a piece of cotton-wool, and tossed it into the cage.

The big black-maned lion got up and investigated the cotton-wool in a leisurely way. Then any fierceness he had melted from him altogether. He almost seemed to simper and become starry-eyed. He rolled over on the cotton-wool like a kitten in ecstasy, waving his great pads in the air.

Dick laughed till the tears came. 'Still,' said Alice, 'I wouldn't depend upon scent to melt his heart if he was charging at me across the veld.'

They left this delightful Zoo for a small excursion through and beyond Pretoria. Out they went past the University where the students kept a replica of a trek-wagon in one of the halls, past the Nuclear Energy Research Station, and, further on, the famous



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Onderstepoort Veterinary Research Institute. They gazed from a distance on the blue dumps of the Premier Diamond Mine, and beyond, far beyond, Alice said, there were many more mines, the coal mines of Witbank.

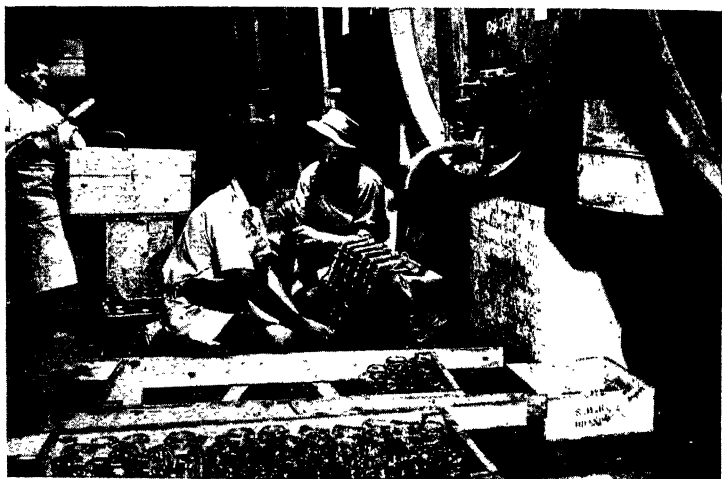
When they left Pretoria that afternoon at about five, both Dick and Alice were a little exhausted. Reluctantly they had refused an invitation to spend yet another night with the van Stadens. A rapid electric train whipped them through innumerable small stations each with its own flower-garden. When they reached the big Germiston Junction, the sight of gold-mines made Dick feel as if he had come home again. Dusk was falling and there was a decided nip in the air as Alice and he stepped out, at last, on to the seething, many-platformed Johannesburg station.

'I never did ask the van Stadens my question', said Dick, as they were hurrying up Eloff Street, through Johannesburg's central shopping area.

'Nor did you', said Alice, laughing.



*ABOVE: The great table-topped mountain that towers over Cape Town.  
BELOW: Camp's Bay, one of Cape Town's attractive suburbs.*



*ABOVE: The 'trees and vineyards and lovely white farmhouses', on the way to Paarl. BELOW: Among the 'goliaths' in the cellars of K.W.V. wine factory.'*

## Chapter 11

# DIAMONDS, SPACE AND LITTLE BUSHES

When Dick and his father started off on their journey round the Union the entire Blackson family accompanied them to the station at nine o'clock in the evening in order to see them safely aboard the south-bound train. They found when they consulted the notice-board in search of their compartment, which was a first-class one, that it was carrying its full complement of four people. The travellers deposited their light luggage in the little room with a sliding-door leading off the narrow gangway. It had green leather bunks and two windows. After this the Wisleys got out of the train again and stood talking to the Blacksons. Paul, Cecil and Dick wandered about amongst the crowd on the platform looking at the long line of carriages. There were a dining saloon, the second-class compartments, which carried six people, and the native carriages, or third-class compartments, which looked more bare and uncomfortable than the European coaches.

When they arrived back from their round of inspection they found their fathers had wandered off to buy a selection of South African English magazines for the Wisleys to read on the train. Mr Blackson was commenting on them to Dick's father.

'These three are periodicals with a politically liberal outlook, the quarterly *Africa South*, the monthly *Forum*, and the fortnightly *Contact*. Liberal journals rise and fall in South Africa with monotonous regularity, and these are the three latest, and probably not the last. All are well worth reading, especially *Africa South*. Then there's one of these family magazines, called *Personality*. But we're pretty poorly off for popular magazines in English in South Africa. The competition from English and American magazines is too fierce. Only in Afrikaans do a whole range of lively popular magazines flourish—*Huisgenoot*, *Sarie Marais*, *Rooi Rose*, and so

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on. And there is an excellent State Information picture magazine of high standard called *Panorama*.'

Just then a bell began to clamour and an official walking down the platform cried out, 'All seats please! *Alle sitplekke asseblief*'.

Ten minutes later the train had settled down to a smooth, rhythmic 'kerlickety-klack-kerlickety-klack' and the streets and lights of Johannesburg, on either side, were becoming more and more distant. Away ahead the great steam-engine gave a blast on its whistle and Dick had a feeling almost of homesickness. He drew in his head and found their two travelling companions chatting in a most friendly fashion with his father.

One turned out to be a proprietor of a small garage in a *dorp* a little beyond Kimberley, and an Afrikaner if Dick could judge by his accent. The other was an insurance company official returning to Cape Town, a sprucely-dressed gentleman who spoke English with a flat, slightly cockney accent.

'You going right through to the Cape?' asked the insurance gentleman of Dick's father.

'I'm going there eventually', Dick's father answered, and explained that he was on a business mission which took him to Kimberley first, then across to Bloemfontein and thereafter to the Cape.

'You should have done it the other way round', said the first speaker. 'The journey to Cape Town that way takes about four hours less. And I say the quicker you get through this central part of South Africa, the better.'

He winked at Dick and Mr Wisley, and jerked his head humorously towards their other travelling companion.

The garage proprietor stopped looking at the faded photo of South African scenery and animals inset in one of the walls and said, 'You've got to live in the centre of South Africa to appreciate it properly. It's not as bad as you make out.'

'Well, it may suit you Plattelanders, but I'm never happy away from the Cape', said the insurance gentleman.

'You Kaapenaars can have your south-easters and mountains and scenery and living all crushed together', answered the other, 'but I like my feeling of space and being able to see for miles.'

'Yes, but what is there to see for miles?' asked the insurance

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gentleman laughing. 'Sometimes I think God felt sorry for making the west side of South Africa so dull and scattered diamonds all over it just to make up for the emptiness of it all.'

Mr Wisley interrupted this good-natured argument to ask what a 'Plattelander' and a 'Kaapenaar' were. He learnt that the Platteland was anywhere not in the region of a big city and that a 'Kaapenaar' was an inhabitant of the peninsula and the south-western districts of the Cape Province.

'Do you mean', Dick asked, 'that you can find diamonds anywhere on the west side of the Cape—that you just pick them up?'

'Well, you've got to look pretty hard, sonny', said the Plattelander. 'But if you take the dry, flat stretch from Namaqualand to the top of the south-west, taking in the northern Cape and the west Transvaal, you could call it the diamond area. They're also all over the Namib Desert along the South West Africa coast, and along the Namaqualand coast of the northern Cape. There were discoveries round Ventersdorp and Lichtenburg up there in the south-west Transvaal. In one rush I saw there there were twenty-five thousand people. Just imagine it, son: a hot day with policemen keeping order and then bang! a gun fires the signal and twenty-five thousand people are going like madmen across the veld to peg their claims.'

'But Kimberley's the centre of the diamond business, of course', the insurance man said. 'There they had the big booms in the old days and De Beers, the big diamond combine, was formed by Rhodes there. They don't work all the diamonds round Kimberley because they'd put too many on the market and make them cheap. Once they thought, before they found gold, that Kimberley was going to be what Johannesburg is now.'

'Aye, poor old Kimberley', said the Plattelander. 'But things are looking up there, what with everybody wanting diamonds again and all those new gold-mines in the Free State.'

They were interrupted by an attendant—a man with a light-brown skin whom Dick afterwards discovered to be a 'Cape Coloured'—coming to pull down the bunks and make up the beds for the night. They all went off to the saloon and over tea discussed things other than Kimberley so that

Dick had to wait until he arrived in the town to hear more about it.

Kimberley struck Dick as the sort of town he had expected to see in South Africa before he saw Pretoria and Johannesburg. It was medium-sized, with about forty thousand inhabitants, of whom about fifteen thousand were white, and it had the odd appearance of being pressed flat against the earth. The more Dick wandered about the town, the stronger became his impression that a lot of its houses were empty—that they had been left standing like that during a great exodus of inhabitants. The big clubs, the ambitious walks, and the fine houses had an air of loneliness. Yet there were many interesting things to see in Kimberley and many memories lingered of the famous Cecil Rhodes who had been very fond of the city, even after gold had attracted so many away to Johannesburg and the town had lost most of its prosperity. There was the headquarters of the De Beers, where Dick was shown piles of precious stones. To see them lying in heaps like that was a little breath-taking! Finally, just outside the town, Dick was shown the greatest man-made hole in the world, a vast rock-ribbed cavern going down into the earth, nearly a mile round the top and about 3,600 feet deep. Here, hundreds of the earlier miners had burrowed for riches.

Soon Dick and his father were on the train again on their way to Bloemfontein, the capital of the Orange Free State, a journey of just over a hundred miles. 'This'd be the place for cricket', said Mr Wisley as they stared out at the great grassy plains, broken up here and there by sharp-peaked or flat-topped hills. 'I should think the veld could provide more than enough pitches to hold all the test matches in the world.' There was indeed something of the sleepy atmosphere that prevails at a timeless test-match hanging over that wide countryside. The occasional islands of trees gathered round distant farmhouses, fields of dry maize-stalks and windmills all had the appearance of day-dreaming, like spectators.

Dick and his father, and everybody else within hearing distance, were amused for a large part of the journey by two large, very sunburnt men who clambered, deep in argument, on to the train from a small siding. One was obviously in the best of humours

and kept clapping the other on the shoulder and, although he spoke in Afrikaans, they gathered he was trying to cheer his companion up. The other stared out of the window to the north most of the time with a look of brooding sorrow and refused to be comforted. The Wisleys had got into conversation with a fellow traveller and he now acted as interpreter and told them that the two men were brothers and farmers. Apparently their father had left two farms and the elder one, having first choice, had taken the only farm with a good supply of water. But the other farm, which fell to the lot of the younger, had turned out to be within the area of the new gold-strikes and had been sold by him for a fabulous price. The sorrowful looking man was, of course, the elder brother.

The two brothers wrangled over the younger one's good fortune all the way to Bloemfontein. The elder one made a long speech to the younger one to this effect: 'Our father left us what he thought were two farms. He didn't know he was leaving a gold mine. If he had known he was leaving a gold mine, he would have divided it between us. I think you owe it to the memory of our father's honour to give me half what you got for your farm and I'll give half my farm in return.'

The younger one laughed heartily and slapped his brother on the back. 'What are you complaining about?' he asked. 'You wanted water and you got it. Cheer up, brother! Why, here I am even taking you to Bloemfontein to buy you something to mix with your water.'

The elder stared northwards to where the famous gold-strikes had been made and clasped his brow in anguish. 'It was an unfair choice', he cried. 'If I had known what was under that heap of stones and grass I would have let you have the water. I left it to you only because I knew what a good farmer you were and wanted you to show the people what you were made of by growing crops where no one else could. I knew you could do it. . . .'

'Yes, and look how good I was!' cried the other nearly rolling off the seat in merriment. 'I grew a gold mine there!'

The argument went on in the most friendly fashion and when Dick later saw the brothers in the lobby of Polley's Hotel in Bloemfontein they were still wrangling.



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The new gold-mines to its north, Dick guessed, must have brought changes to Bloemfontein. He had once heard it referred to as 'the Capital of Platteland'. Although the city still had the look of being an outsize *dorp*, with some air of the wise old Presidents who used to rule the farmers of the Free State from it, even of the calm Appeal Court judges who today sit there, a rising excitement was apparent. A monument to the women and children who had died in British concentration camps recalled the past, new factories springing up all round pointed towards the future.

By some error the Wisleys found themselves in a second-class compartment when they renewed their journey. It was occupied only by an elderly clerk from a *dorp* outside Bloemfontein, and his young son, a boy of six. He was going down to the Cape for a holiday, he explained. He didn't like crowds but he did like the sea, so he went out of season when nobody else went there.

'The trains are so crowded nowadays', he said 'that I don't suppose we can hope to be just four of us all the way down.'

Indeed crowds were quite an obsession with him. He watched anxiously at each little *dorp* they came to to see if someone might be put in with them. At last his fears were realized and a tall, very blue-eyed young man in a suit which seemed to prick him, got in with a tin trunk done up in rope.

The newcomer put out a large, sun-reddened hand to Dick's father and said abruptly, 'My naam is Fourie!'

Mr Wisley rose to his feet a little awkwardly and shook hands. The clerk told the newcomer that the Wisleys were just out from England. And then he explained to the Wisleys that in some parts of the Platteland it was customary for people to introduce themselves in that way. They started to talk to the young man, who informed them in cautious, shy English that he was a 'kneg'—a farm foreman—and that he was on his way to visit his brother who had a farm in the Cape.

'Do you find this good farming country?' asked Mr Wisley, pointing to the dry grassy plains fringed with long, low hills across which they were passing.

'For cattle and sheep it is all right', the 'kneg' answered carefully.

And to their surprise the Wisleys saw quite a number of herds

## DIAMONDS, SPACE AND LITTLE BUSHES

of cattle, then flocks of sheep as they travelled rapidly, and it seemed, endlessly, through country which became progressively arid and dreary. Gradually the stoniness of the earth and number of stunted little bushes increased as they went deeper into the south. The hills, or 'koppies', became table-topped or rose to a crown, shaped like a cotton-reel. Immense distances spread round them, a cloudless blue sky above. Occasionally the train passed through bare-looking *dorps*, each with its big Dutch Reformed Church. Along the line at intervals were cottages for the railway gangers who looked after the line, and one or two hovels with coloured or black children playing around them among the fowls. For the rest, there were little bushes, stones and 'koppies'. 'Now we're really in Karoo country', said the 'kneg' with strange enthusiasm as they rumbled over a broad water chasm, at the bottom of which ran the winter-shrunken waters of South Africa's biggest river, the Orange. Over it they crossed from the Orange Free State into the Cape.

At sunset a change stole over the country and the air became chilly. The distances were first golden, then crimson and finally turned to purple after the sun had disappeared. The sunset itself was like some small affair on its own on the outer edges of the world. For a moment there seemed to be a stirring of life in the great distances and Dick fancied he could hear birds calling far away. Then darkness fell and all was very still.

Dick asked the clerk, when they were turning into bed that night, if they were still passing through little bushes and the clerk said they were. Young Wisley fell asleep assured that he was missing nothing.

## Chapter 12

### CAPE TOWN, THE 'MOTHER CITY'

Dick woke up with memories of the previous day's blue skies, little bushes, great spaces, sheep and occasional tin-roofed farmhouses, and on looking out of the window after his morning coffee, he was astounded at the changes the night's travelling had wrought in the scenery. The train was winding its way into a valley between great rocky mountains and the sky was damp with showery clouds. Soon they passed through graceful little towns, beside thatched farmhouses and between vineyards and lucerne fields. And always encircling them were tall, bare mountains.

'All round here—wine and wheat country', the 'kneg' said.

Staring out at the scenery Dick realized that here was something he had missed in other parts of South Africa without knowing what it was. Everything about him looked as if people had lived there for a long time. The tilled fields, the little bridges over the streams, the white-walled houses, all gave the impression that they were quite used to being there. They seemed to have grown into the scenery with the mountains and trees. It was the only part of the Platteland to remind Dick faintly of English country.

Dick's first impressions of Cape Town were strangely mixed. First of all a great wind was blowing, which whipped the trees and even rattled the train. Then there was the enormous cemetery through which they travelled for miles, it seemed. Quite suddenly he was looking out across a curved blue bay with choppy little waves and docks filled with ships and yachts. Soon they were in a wilderness of railway-lines, dirty factories, and nasty tin sheds. A few moments later Dick found himself staring at a massive, old stone wall, over which peered tops of tall concrete buildings. And behind them all towered the broad rock forehead of Table Mountain with a white lock of cloud falling across it.

Cape Town station seemed to Dick rather like London's Waterloo under a low ceiling. It was South Africa's first railway station—and looked it. Exhibited in the middle of it was the first

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engine ever to run in South Africa. The Wisleys noticed, too, that the faces round about them were not divided simply into White and Black, but had a whole range of browns and yellows in between. Their host, the long and lean Professor Sharp, another old university friend of Mr Wisley's, commented rapidly on this as they went along.

'Yes', he said, as they swept along, 'these paler-skinned people you see are mainly Cape Coloureds. Glorious mixture of original Negro and Malay slaves, Hottentots, Bushmen and as many European nationalities as there are European seafaring nations. Those with fezzes on are predominantly Malay, Cape Malays and Mahommedans. Most interesting race, the Coloureds, most interesting in South Africa. Maybe, they'll be the chief race out here in the future. Europeans and Bantus disappear into the mixture. Hundreds of years of course.

'Odd place, Cape Town', continued the Professor. 'Bit of a mess. Full of contradictions. Beauty and dirt. Mountain slopes full of trees and slums full of eighteenth-century architecture. You may have noticed a series of cemeteries as you came in, called Woltemade—after an old hero who saved a lot of lives in Table Bay. Think you'll like the town, though, Roger. Fond of it myself, South-Easters and languor. Universities, Houses of Parliament, old fortress and oak trees. Factories, bad drainage, Members of Parliament, and housing projects. Bigger mixture than the Americans or the Cape Coloureds. Bit damp now, but the old Cape Doctor will clear it all up today.'

'Cape Doctor?' queried Mr Wisley, as the Professor stowed the last bag of luggage into his car.

'Local name for the south-easter. Supposed to blow all our clouds, cares, and contagions away. Does too. Bundles the mists over the mountains, and infuriates everyone so much that we turn from cursing our own misfortune, to cursing it instead.'

Suddenly Mr Wisley's hat was whipped off his head and went gaily cavorting along a pavement between the feet of passers-by. Dick tore after it. He finally came up with the hat when it had been trapped by a laughing Coloured man at the entrance to a side street, full of flower-sellers. Dick looked down this alley in amazement. The whole of it had been roofed over to make concrete

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shelters, and under them sat dozens of plump Coloured women energetically offering flowers for sale. The flowers themselves looked like a collapsed rainbow draped over the troughs and tables along the middle of the street.

The Professor and Mr Wisley, his hair very much blown about, came up, laughing. Big shop windows and tall buildings were all about them. Professor Sharp pointed across the road to a wall of concrete rising on the other side. 'That's the Post Office, if you want to send off a cable', he said.

They went inside the spacious central hall. On the walls were big murals showing the early settlers landing at the Cape in 1652, and modern scenes of liners and the docks. There were stone seats and stone writing counters, some marked for Whites to use and others marked for 'non-Europeans'. The counters running round the sides were marked in the same way.

While Mr Wisley sent his cable, the Professor chatted to Dick. 'Appropriate to visit the Post Office first in Cape Town', he said. 'Civilized world first used the place as a post office. Sailing ships going from Europe to the East used to leave messages for one another on stones on the beach.'

Back in the car the Professor quickly shook free of the traffic and swung up on to a fine double highway divided by rockeries running along the lower slopes of the mountain. Soon they could see the whole of Table Bay, the rectangular docks, and the central city spread out beneath them. Robben Island lay low in the mouth of the bay, on the other shore dark hills rolled away to the north, and houses of the city crept up the three steepening slopes behind it. Another peak, Lion's Head, looking rather like a balding, conical head of a senile king of beasts, peered over the wooded shoulder of the Table.

'All those bare stretches between the edge of the city and docks rather take away from an otherwise magnificent scene', said Mr Wisley.

The Professor sighed. 'Yes', he said. 'That's a whole area reclaimed from the sea, but it hasn't been built on yet—or at least building is only just beginning there. All sorts of town-planning experts from all over the world have given us ideas on how to construct that new part. I hope they are the right ideas.'

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Further on, he drew their attention to the wooded slopes of Devil's Peak and the long expanses of grass in between the trees.

'What are those animals roaming about up there?' cried Dick.

The Professor smiled. 'Some of the bigger buck, wildebeeste, and zebra. It was Rhodes's idea. So much around here was.'

They were able, too, to see the southern suburbs spreading out along the broad sandy isthmus that joined the mountainous Cape Peninsula to the distant mountainous regions of the mainland. They could even make out dimly the sweep of the wide beaches of False Bay curving inwards until they touched the foot of the Peninsula mountains at the holiday suburb of Muizenberg. On they went past an old wind-mill, past the ivy-walled mountainside University, and the Professor pointed down the slope to the brown teak window-frames, white walls, and twisty chimneys of a big double-storey house among the trees and lawns. 31192

'That's the Prime Minister's residence when he's down at Parliament', he said. 'When Rhodes died in the midst of the wreckage left by the South African War, as an act of faith in the future he left this house, Groote Schuur, his own house, to be the home of the Prime Ministers of a United South Africa. Although he made £13 million in the interior, built up the world's biggest diamond industry round Kimberley, helped to develop the Rand, and founded Rhodesia, this mountain slope and Groote Schuur were the places he treasured most on earth.' 12

Then they turned off Rhodes Drive into the upper parts of the suburb of Rondebosch. Behind a rambling untrimmed hedge rose the thatched roof of the Professor's rambling untrimmed house. Waiting at the gate to receive them was pretty, petite, and ringlet-haired Mrs Sharp. Beside her stood her two children, 14-year-old Frank and 11-year-old Elise.

'All this and two new friends for you as well', murmured Mr Wisley to Dick as they got out of the Professor's car.

The next morning Frank and Elise stayed out of school and took Dick on what Frank called 'a planned tour' of Cape Town. They caught one of the electric trains that run through to the city—some of them coming from as far as the naval base at Simonstown, twenty miles down the coast from Rondebosch. They rattled

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in rapidly through increasingly crowded and less attractive suburbs, and past the massive wall again into central Cape Town.

'What's that wall?' asked Dick.

'All in due course', said Frank. 'First things first.'

And with these mysterious words he hurried them out of the station, past the lane of the flower-sellers and a small square with a statue of an old bearded gentleman on one side and a big brown church on the other, along a lane between the old white building, where the slaves were once kept, and the grounds of the Houses of Parliament, and up an avenue of oak-trees. They arrived breathless at the South African museum, a brown stone building with a fossil tree standing in front of it.

'This is where we begin!' said Frank, and led them inside.

They went into a hall where there were three big glass cases filled with the most life-like reproductions of people Dick had ever seen. They were naked, small, yellowish people with wizened faces and ancient eyes. Some of the women had enormous behinds. Some of the men carried bows and arrows. But even the little children looked shrivelled with age.

'The Bushmen', said Frank. 'The first human inhabitants of South Africa.'

'Are they extinct?' asked Dick.

'Not quite', said Frank. 'There are about ten thousand left altogether, mostly living up in the Kalahari Desert or along the top of South West Africa. All these figures were done from living Bushmen, some of them found not far from Cape Town.'

'They look pretty frail', Dick commented.

'No. They're tough enough, very hardy in fact. They can live on next to nothing for long periods. You see the big behinds those women have got. When they're living well that's where they store fat, and they've got it as a kind of reserve when they're having a bad time. They live by running after buck and shooting them with poisoned arrows. Trouble came for them when they started shooting Hottentots' and White men's cattle as if they were fair game. Then everybody started hunting the Bushmen in turn.'

'But I thought Hottentots were the first people around here', Dick said.

'They were the first to meet the White man here. But actually they're a mixture of the original Bushmen and the Bantu people who came later. There are not many pure-blooded Hottentots left either. They've either been absorbed into the Coloured people, or drifted away to the north. Besides, there was a small-pox epidemic that nearly wiped them all out.'

Frank then led them firmly out of the museum, and permitted no deviation to visit the art gallery. He went on until they had passed rose-beds by the dozen, and a fish-pond or two, and reached the middle of some big gardens, with trees, shrubs, and flowers of every description. Citizens of every age and colour strolled about or sat dreaming or reading on the benches.

'This', announced Frank, 'is what first brought the White man to South Africa.'

'These gardens!' said Dick, astonished.

'Not in their present state. But this is where they first planted vegetables. And the Cape was first occupied as a sort of market-garden to supply sailors. Before that half the sailors round the Cape used to die of scurvy for want of something green to eat.'

Inflexibly Frank led his little party on again, down the Avenue and Adderley Street, the central street of Cape Town. Elise showed a tendency to linger beside the attractive displays of the wide shop-windows, but Frank marched steadily on towards the distant prospect of ships and cranes. They did not quite go as far down as that, however, but stopped where the big buildings came to an abrupt end. True, the road, which had by then changed its name from Adderley Street to Heerengracht, went on to the harbour. Lawns and young trees grew alongside it and down the middle. There was a lot of building activity on either side with tall modern buildings going up. But the occupied city stopped very nearly in line with the statue of a bewigged seventeenth-century gentleman in a broad-brimmed hat.

'Jan van Riebeeck, first Commander of the Cape on behalf of the Dutch East India Company', said Frank with a flourish. 'He organized the planting of the first cabbage grown on South African soil—may the Lord forgive him! He founded it so well that it just wouldn't remain a cabbage-patch. When the East India Company first tried to limit the place by allowing few wives



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to come out, some settlers married Hottentot women and founded our present Coloured people. Others trekked north and founded Stellenbosch and Paarl, or over the Hottentots Holland Mountains and founded Swellendam.

'Now for your wall!' Frank said, turning to Dick.

'Are we going to walk all the way to the Castle now!' wailed Elise.

'No', said Frank. 'We'll go by taxi. Only we've got to be careful about the *apartheid* regulations and not call a taxi for non-Whites.'

They got a taxi suited to their colour and drove off to the 'Castle', back up Adderley Street and turning down past a great open parking space called the Parade. Soldiers from the 'Castle' used to drill on it in the old days, and still do on special occasions. But normally it was as Dick saw it. There were dozens of covered Indian fruit-stalls lining one side and all sorts of open-air counters on trestles where everything from potted plants to second-hand books and brass-ware was sold. Cars glittered in the sun, covering the whole Parade like a plague of multi-coloured insects.

The 'Castle' turned out to be a squat and massive star-shaped fort, one of whose walls Dick had seen from the train. Two old cannons guarded the heavy-arched entrance and sentries stood on the cobbled road which ran through it. The arch itself was decorated with the coats-of-arms of several old Dutch cities linked with the Dutch East India Company.

'This is the oldest building in the Union', said Frank. 'The oldest in Southern Africa, if you don't count the Zimbabwe Ruins and some forts in Portuguese East and West. It was completed in about 1680.'

'Seems unnecessarily thick to guard against arrows from the Hottentots', said Dick.

'There were still lots of British, French, and pirates roaming the seas too', explained Frank. 'Besides, the British pitched up here thirty years before the Dutch did, ran up the Union Jack, and proclaimed it part of the Empire in the name of James I. Then they went off and forgot about it. Still, no one ever knew when they might decide to come back...'

'The British were the first Whites to get here then?'

'No, the Portuguese rounded the Cape more than 150 years

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before the Dutch took over. But the huge seas rolling round this corner of Africa gave them mixed feelings about the place. Some called it the Cape of Storms, and others, the Cape of Good Hope.'

They went in past the sentries and found themselves in a big square, part lawn and part cobbles. Cutting across it was a *kat*, a long block of state-rooms and offices. There was a beautifully built entrance fronted by a neat double stairway and balcony, from which edicts used once to be read. All round the walls of the fort were other offices and store-rooms.

'You see that room', said Frank, pointing to a window high up. 'That's where the cruel Dutch Governor, Piet van Noodt, dropped dead. One of the prisoners he condemned to death for nothing cursed him from the gallows, saying, "When I die, may van Noodt die!" And as they strung him up, van Noodt keeled over in his office, stone-dead.'

They stared up at the window with interest. 'Of course', Frank added, 'old van Noodt might not have died precisely at that moment—it's a bit like the beds Queen Elizabeth I slept in. He died all over the place—and everybody was jolly glad he did.'

They wandered about on the battlements, looking out over Cape Town and towards the sea. Each corner of the Castle had an arrow-head bastion, named after one or other of the titles of the Dutch Stadholder, who later became William III of England.

'The English came back eventually', Frank said. 'They took over the Cape temporarily during the Napoleonic wars in the name of a later Dutch Stadholder, to stop Napoleon's fleet capturing the Cape. They were still here a hundred years later.'

Then they went to have tea in the Castle tea-room.

Soon they were on their way again, taking their route across the Parade. They lingered about the second-hand stalls, and bought some fine 'Golden Delicious' apples, then eating them they wandered over to a very fat African woman sitting immovably beside a lot of dried-up roots spread out beside her on the pavement. There were not only roots, but big vegetables that looked like onions, and little beans, and pieces of bark.

'What are these?' asked Dick.

'You want some, Little Baas?' asked the woman, stirring into

life and greeting him with a jolly smile. 'These are medicines my people use.'

'What's that there?' asked Frank.

'That is bark—good for stomach. Those beans there—make you very lucky. I even got little bottles of lion fat to make men very strong', said the herb-seller, amiably displaying her wares.

'I'll be strong enough without your old lion fat!' retorted Frank, and the fat woman laughed uproariously at him.

'Mind you', said Frank, as they walked away, 'Father says the old witch-doctors had about six hundred different herbs, and many of them were very effective medicines.'

Frank took them back past the square with the statue of the bearded gentleman in the middle. He was Jan Hendrik Hofmeyr, a great journalist, who did so much towards bringing unity among the Afrikaners, making them conscious of their language, and building up the strength of the Calvinist Dutch Reformed Church, the principal church of the Afrikaners.

'He was one of Rhodes's chief supporters when Rhodes was Prime Minister of the Cape', added Frank. 'But then Rhodes was behind a sudden expedition against the Boers of the Transvaal, called the Jameson Raid. The raiders got whipped badly, but there was a lot of ill-feeling about it. Old Hofmeyr, who was a Boer himself, broke with Rhodes altogether after that.'

They looked in briefly at the Groote Kerk—the Great Church—on the side of the square, the mother church of all the Dutch Reformed churches in the country. They admired its magnificent organ and its fine sculptured pulpit. Then they wandered across Adderley Street and up to the stone Anglican Cathedral with a large notice in its porch announcing defiantly, 'This Church is open at All times to All people of All races'.

'It's all very English around here', said Frank, and he led them a little way up Queen Victoria Street, as far as the pillared South African Public Library with its unique collections of South African books. Then they strolled down the Avenue again and found Mrs Sharp waiting for them at the Adderley Street entrance.

'Hop in', she said. 'We'll go and eat down by the harbour, but we're going to listen to Parliament a bit this afternoon. Our member says he'll get us tickets.'



ABOVE: *Working in the vineyards at Paarl.* BELOW: *Peaks of the Tzitzikamma Mountains, between George and Port Elizabeth.*



*Protected by thick leather gloves and rubber boots, the attendant at the Snake Park, Port Elizabeth, picks up handfuls of his deadly-poisonous charges.*

They went straight down Adderley Street and the Heerengracht again, rode alongside the great rectangular stretch of the Duncan Docks, and then past a dry dock across to an older part of the harbour called the Victoria Basin. Gulls abounded there, tugs creaked alongside wooden jetties, fleets of whalers lay dreaming together in the sun, fishing boats and motor boats chugged to and fro, and a little ship-building industry hammered zealously away at growing hulls upon the ramps. In the midst of it all was a glass-enclosed café with a magnificent view of all this nautical activity and inactivity. This was the meal in Cape Town Dick always remembered best. Whether it was the atmosphere or the giant shrimp *piri-piri* with rice, he could not tell: but when Mrs Sharp summoned them all to make their way to the Houses of Parliament there was nothing he wanted to do less.

They walked in through the front entrance of Parliament's grounds and Dick found himself among pretty flower beds and lawns. A big statue of Queen Victoria stood above them looking very unamused. The Houses of Parliament themselves were a long, rambling, doubled-storeyed, many-pillared stone building, which had the Senate or Upper House at one end and the Assembly at the other.

'The Senate has got about as much say in things as your House of Lords, while the Assembly is about the same as your House of Commons', explained Mrs Sharp to Dick.

Their member met them at a side entrance and led them up to one of the bays, then hurried back to attend the debate below.

The Assembly was an oak-pannelled chamber with bays and galleries looking down into it, and microphones suspended on wires from the glass ceiling above it. The Speaker sat on a high hooded chair at the top of the chamber with his Clerk and other assistants at a desk in front of him—looking rather like a school-master, thought Dick. On benches down either side and across the bottom of the chamber sat his pupils—only some had bald heads, and others grey hairs. And a very rumbustious and rebellious class they seemed, for they often talked among themselves, laughed, jeered, shouted remarks—though they generally fell silent when the Speaker shouted 'Order! Order!'

A member on the Government benches on the Speaker's right

was talking in Afrikaans in a booming voice and with plenty of gestures. He seemed very excited and the Opposition across the way took an obvious delight in baiting him. At one stage the member took up a thick green book and began to read apparently damaging quotations from it. Remarks in English and Afrikaans assailed him from the other side.

'Why don't you stop reading my speech and make your own?' called a member.

'No—don't stop him', counselled another. 'Yours is the best part of his speech.'

'They're talking about some aspect of *apartheid* and race relations', murmured Mrs Sharp to Dick. 'They seem to spend most of their time doing that—and they always get worked up about it.'

An Opposition speaker replied to the Government speaker—also in Afrikaans, and just as excitedly. Mrs Sharp explained that the Government was formed of Nationalists, who stood strongly for *apartheid*, a republic, and Afrikaner progress. They had won three elections in a row and had a big majority. The Opposition were the United Party who stood for keeping all the colours working together though living apart, building up White strength by rapid immigration to remove any fears of being 'swamped' by non-Whites, and continuing the closest possible relations with the Commonwealth. There were also three special representatives of the nine million Africans and four for the one million Coloured people. These, too, were part of the Opposition, and all were White. In fact, the only Black men Dick saw in the time he spent in Parliament, was a lonely figure sitting looking down from the non-Whites bay.

Suddenly there was a tensing of the atmosphere of the House, a groan from the Opposition, and a cry of, 'Here it goes again!'

A big grey-haired man with a surprisingly youthful and eager face was standing up in the Government front benches. Dick had noticed him sitting alone there.

'That's the Prime Minister, Dr Verwoerd', said Mrs Sharp. 'The Opposition always complains he takes two hours to say what can be said in ten minutes.'

But, whether he did or not, Dick noticed that everybody listened

very attentively to the Prime Minister. He spoke like a man who has a great deal to say, but is anxious for everything he says to be well understood. He had a clear, rather high and emphatic voice—and when he quoted something in English he had no trace of an accent.

'He had his early schooling in an English school in Rhodesia', explained Mrs Sharp. She went on to tell Dick that Dr Verwoerd, after being educated in universities in Germany, England, and America, came back to South Africa as a Professor of Psychology, then became a newspaper editor, and finally came into the Government of Dr Malan as Minister of Native Affairs. It took him exactly nine years from entering Parliament to become Prime Minister.

Mrs Sharp, who was an Afrikaner herself, translated a few sentences from the Prime Minister's speech. 'He's explaining that South Africa's three million Whites cannot let the control of affairs out of their hands—because law, order, and the economy would break down. He claims it would mean national suicide for the Whites and utter ruin for the non-Whites. He says the Whites must remain strong and prosperous so as to educate the Africans rapidly and build up their own areas for them.'

Government cheers greeted the Prime Minister when he sat down, and counter cheers from the Opposition hailed a tall figure that rose from the Opposition front benches. He, too, had been sitting alone. This new speaker was black-haired, handsome, and smiling, and looked even younger than the Prime Minister. He spoke in English in a pleasant voice.

'That's Sir de Villiers Graaff, leader of the Opposition', said Mrs Sharp. Sir de Villiers had been a good boxer in his university days, had become a constitutional lawyer, and was now a big cattle-breeder. During the fighting in the Western Desert in 1942, he had been taken prisoner, and spent the rest of the war in Germany organizing escapes. 'That's probably a good training for an Opposition leader in South Africa', commented Mrs Sharp. 'Anyway, he's the youngest, and easily the handsomest, head of the Opposition South Africa's ever had. He's in his forties.'

'Was he knighted for it?' asked Dick.

'No', said Mrs Sharp. 'Since the 1920's South Africans have not



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been allowed to accept titles. He inherited the baronetcy from his father. It's supposed to be his biggest political handicap.'

Dick listened carefully to Sir de Villiers. If Dr Verwoerd wanted the hundreds of millions of pounds necessary to build up the Native territories, he was saying, he would have to bring even more Black labourers into the White areas to boost the industrial effort. 'In fact, the more sincerely you try to apply *apartheid*, the more you will have to mix Black and White in our economy to pay for it. This is shown by the Nationalists themselves. In the dozen years in which they have been trying to tear the races apart, the number of Natives in the cities has risen by 750,000. The truth is that our economy is a single whole, and any attempt to divide it up among the races will only mean disaster for us all.'

Then a woman member rose. 'That's Mrs Ballinger, head of the little Liberal Party. She's represented the Natives for over twenty years.'

'There you have it', Mrs Ballinger was saying. 'One side talks about the interests of the White race, the other about the interests of the economy. But neither discusses the needs or rights of the African as a fellow human-being at all.'

The Government side jeered at her. The Opposition listened in silence.

By this time they had all grown a little weary of listening to speeches—and perhaps Mrs Sharp looked weariest of them all. They walked back to their car past a row of trees where hundreds of birds were chattering shrilly in the late afternoon sun.

'People say that when a member of Parliament dies a new bird joins the others up there', said Mrs Sharp.

'Dick's had a long day', said Frank. 'He's been through South African history from the Bushmen right up to Dr Verwoerd.'

'All about nobody knowing whether we were the Cape of Storms or Cape of Good Hope, everything,' said Elise ruefully.

'Nobody does yet', said Mrs Sharp, and got into the car.

## *Chapter 13*

# MEALS, MUSIC AND HISTORY

The north-west wind blew a great procession of clouds through the gap between Devil's Peak and Table Mountain, and it rained for three days. Then the south-easter rolled the clouds back over the mountain again. That evening Professor Sharp said, 'To-morrow we will make a holiday. Besides, the universities are meeting one another in a league final at Newlands.'

Dick discovered this meant that the Rugby teams of Cape Town University and Stellenbosch University—the big Afrikaans University at a town about thirty miles away—were going to meet to decide who were the champions of that part of the Cape for the year. As the two were the biggest university rivals in South Africa, the occasion was bound to be exciting and colourful.

Eagerly Frank and Elise planned an expedition which was to fill the morning. Elise cried, 'We'll go to Cape Point and see the baboons, and then through Simonstown and have tea on top of Red Hill, and after that we'll go to Kirstenbosch and climb Table Mountain...' 'Don't be a clot!' said her brother. 'We've got about three hours, not three weeks. Besides, we should ask Dick whether he's got any special preference.'

'If it's a sunny day', said Dick, 'Why don't we go for a swim?'

The children looked at Dick in horror. 'Swim!' cried Frank hoarsely. 'Man, we'd be mauve with cold. It would be bad enough on the Indian Ocean side in False Bay, and the Atlantic side in Table Bay or Sea Point or Clifton would leave you stiff as a plank.'

'But we could walk along the beach', said Elise.

Quickly it was decided. A visit to the beach, then watch some yachting, lunch at Kirstenbosch, and early to Newlands to get good seats. For the rest of the day, Professor Sharp could decide. 'Thanks', said Professor Sharp.

Muizenberg in the early morning sunshine was an empty but inviting sight. The long beach sloped from the bathing boxes and the promenade gently down into lazily breaking waves. Frank,

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Elise, and Dick ran on to the beach in their bathing costumes, and darted along the wide sands while their parents strolled more sedately behind. The boys began to run into the waves, always a little deeper in, and the water felt very cold.

'I'll bet you won't go right in', dared Frank.

'All right, I will—if you will', retorted Dick.

'O.K.!'

And Frank took a quick run splashing his way deeper in and suddenly flung himself headlong. Close behind him Dick did the same. Icy water knocked the breath out of him.

'Wow!' said Dick, shooting upright again.

'That's enough for me', shouted Frank, tearing out again to where Elise was calling to them.

Professor Sharp sternly ordered them all to go running along the beach to get some circulation back. The sands seemed endless, and went curving away into the distance, getting broader and broader. Heaps of sea-weed, kelp, lay everywhere along them. The youngsters came to two lines of Coloured fishermen, trousers rolled up above the knee, boats dragged high on the beach, hauling their nets through the surf. Further along were others carefully spading the sands for mussels, and putting them into sacks. They turned back to see what the fishermen had caught.

It was one of the fishermen's bad days. With shouts and curses they were pulling the occasional edible fish out of a host of pale crabs and fish that had blown themselves up to look like balloons. 'They're called *blaas-oppies*. They blow themselves up like bullfrogs to frighten other fish and they're deadly poisonous to eat', said Frank.

'This is not a good sample of Cape fish', said the Professor, who had come up with his wife and Mr Wisley.

'It certainly can't be', laughed Mr Wisley. 'I've never before enjoyed such a variety of fish as in Cape Town. Is this where they catch your famous rock-lobsters?'

'No,' said Professor Sharp, 'You'd have to go to rockier parts of the Peninsula for them, Hout Bay, Cape Point, and so on.'

They wandered back along the beach to the car, drove past the holiday hotels and houses of Muizenberg, and on through St James where the houses rose in tiers up the steep mountain-side,

and a railway line and bright bathing booths shared the rocky ledge of the shore. Professor Sharp pointed to a thatched cottage.

'Rhodes died there, after weeks of gasping for breath in the last stages of the heart disease that threatened him all his life', he said. 'Poor Rhodes! If he hadn't been dogged by fear of dying young he would not have been in such a hurry. We'd have more things like Groote Schuur to remember him by today, and less like the Jameson Raid.'

'Did he die young?' asked Mr Wisley.

'He was only forty-eight', replied the Professor.

At Kalk Bay they looked briefly into the neat fishing harbour with numerous little pleasure boats tied up alongside one wharf. Then they swung up on to a mountain-side drive and began to drive back towards Cape Town. Looking back they could see the beaches and flats of Fish Hoek, and far beyond the miniature docks of Simonstown. All along the declivitous coast houses clung to hillsides. But when they looked forward they could see a plain with several lagoons hollowing out the bush above the beach where they had just been walking. 'That's Zeekoe Vlei, where they do so much yachting', said Frank to Dick. As they looked tiny white sails could be seen moving across the surface of one lagoon.

'Yes it's all very lovely', said the Professor suddenly. 'It makes us forget that some people starve in tin shanties in that bush, or pick over refuse-dumps to live.'

They had wasted too much time on the beach to go down to watch the yachts. Professor Sharp wanted to show Mr Wisley something of the Cape Peninsula's unique plant-life in Kirstenbosch. So they returned via the Tokai forest, mostly fir trees, and the lovely Cape-Dutch style building of Tokai itself, now part of a reformatory. It was reputed to have a ghost that from time to time rode a pale horse up the steps into the hall and out again. Beyond this they came to the deep, broad valley of Constantia, filled with white houses and vineyards. 'Napoleon used to get all his wine from the Valley when he was on St Helena. They make excellent red wine', said the Professor.

They took the Southern Cross Drive and rose by it above the Valley, which became the lovelier the more they could see of it. They were on the mountainside again and trees were everywhere.

Finally they arrived at Kirstenbosch, the vast mountainside garden to preserve all the Cape Peninsula flora, and other Cape flora, in as natural a state as possible. Spring was approaching, flowers were beginning to show everywhere, and branches of the big oak-trees were frilled with young green leaves. The air murmured with the sound of water, and white wisps of waterfalls clung to high ledges of rock.

They walked among the flower-beds. Dick was particularly attracted by the small chunky succulent plants, which had evolved especially to withstand long periods of drought. They opened square mouths like chameleons and emitted gay belches of petals. Then there were the mesembryanthemum bushes, also from the Karoo, which became covered with brilliant satiny flowers.

Along one of the many paths that led towards the main routes up the mountain (there were about fifty ways to climb Table Mountain, Frank said), they came upon the Cape's two most famous plants, the protea and the silver-tree. Nowhere was there anything quite like them in the world. The silver-trees' leaves really shimmered like polished silver in the light, and at certain angles the graceful, slender trees looked like flames. There were more than one kind of protea, strange stiff-cupped flowers, with stiff clusters of stamens. They looked to Dick like rough shaving brushes inside brandy-goblets, and indeed they had a delicately sweet liquid in them.

When they were eating lunch in the thatch-roofed restaurant, Professor Sharp remarked, 'We'd better get through this quickly. I hear both universities have had the novel idea of asking Coloured Coon bands to do a march past across the Rugby field before the game begins.'

As they reached Newlands, all Cape Town's three-quarters of a million people seemed to be converging on the high concrete stands of the Rugby-ground. (Not far away from it was the Newlands cricket-ground, that some said was the loveliest cricket-ground in the world.) Blazers were everywhere, and students sported big rosettes. Suddenly there was a cry of, 'Here come the Coons!'

A sound of cheerful guitar-music came from the distance. Soon a marching group of Coloured folk appeared ranging from tiny tots to full-grown men, all dressed in violently coloured suits of

satins and silks, and wearing bright red top-hats. All the men were playing guitars, and their gay rhythm made Dick feel like breaking into a jig.

They got quickly to their seats in the stand. The grounds seemed filled to bursting point and people still came pouring in. Splashes of blazered university students marked where the opposing university supporters had gathered to shout encouragement and sing songs. In front of them stood the opposing top-hatted song-leaders. Soon the Coloured bands came marching on to the field, and the bright green of the grass became covered with the bright moving squares of gaily-dressed Coons. Then the Coons moved off to sit in front of the big block of seats reserved for the Coloured spectators.

For a moment there was a stillness. Then the first team came running on and a roar broke from the crowd that Dick felt could have split the blue sky above them. From then on the noise of cheering, singing, shouting hardly ever ceased, as the swift line-movements swept up and down the field in turn, and forwards knotted, tussled and charged. When tries were scored there was a mighty crescendo of sound, and up in the Coloured stands fezzes, caps, and hats flew into the air. Frank, Elise, even the Professor, cheered for Cape Town University. Mrs Sharp, who had been to Stellenbosch University, naturally cheered for them. Dick and his father simply cheered, and were as hoarse as anybody at the end.

Stellenbosch won, but nobody in Cape Town seemed terribly upset about it. Even their Coon-band supporters went marching off singing 'Die Sacs Kom Terug'—Cape Town Will Return.

It took Professor Sharp some time to get his car out of the mass of slowly moving cars driving away from the grounds. As he struggled he discussed where they should eat that evening and what they should do.

'Some new Italian places have sprung up round Sea Point', he said, 'Quite interesting eating houses are scattered over a wide area of Cape Town, Azure, Gourmet, Turtle, Café Royal, Maximes, the Blue Peter, Normandie, Lobster Pot. We could even go and have curry at The Naaz, a non-European restaurant.'

'No, the Coloured people make their curry too fiery for me', said Mrs Sharp.

## THE YOUNG TRAVELLER IN SOUTH AFRICA

They settled on a place in the centre of Cape Town, and the Professor asked the Wisleys what their entertainment was to be.

'There are three plays on: an amateur company at the Little, two professional companies, one at the Labia, and the other at the Hofmeyr. About half a dozen films. City Orchestra is not playing till tomorrow night. But there is an Eoan Group—that's Coloured—performance of some ballet and opera at the City Hall.'

'I'd like to see the Coloured people tackling the more serious side of music', said Mr Wisley. 'They seem talented enough in the lighter kind.'

'They do the other just as well', said the Professor.

Once again Dick found himself going over the Rhodes Drive. He looked up at the dark wooded slopes of Devil's Peak and saw one cheerful star peeping over its rocky shoulder.

'It doesn't look very sinister', said Dick. 'Why do they call it Devil's Peak?'

'Because of a slip of the tongue', replied the Professor. 'It was first known as Duiwe Kop—the Hill of Doves. But the Dutch word for Devil is Duiwel, so naturally we got things mixed up. Now a Catholic priest wants it renamed Christian Peak'.

'But that would spoil Cape Town's favourite bed-time story', said Frank. 'We believe that the clouds that roll around Devil's Peak come from a ghostly competition between the Devil and an old Dutch pipe-smoker called van Hunks.'

They were in the right mood for eating out and opera. Even when they passed down through the big Coloured quarter in the middle of Cape Town, District Six, the lights and the lively groups of people there seemed to make up for obvious overcrowding in the frequent wretched buildings.

The dinner was excellent, and the excerpts from an Opera and a Ballet done by Coloured singers, dancers, and musicians on the big City Hall stage were all delightfully done. There were, as Mr Wisley remarked, amateurish patches here and there, but the performers put a zest into their voices and action that was infectious. One of the principal dancers was a Coloured dancer who had been highly successful in London, but had returned to teach dancing to his own people. Dick enjoyed every moment of it, while Elise was in ecstasies.

On the way back while Dick watched the lights of Cape Town spreading out below him, Mr Wisley, Mrs Sharp, and Professor Sharp discussed culture.

'There isn't a wide spread of the finer arts of living in South Africa as a whole, yet', said the Professor. 'Such theatre, music and intellectual life as there is is concentrated mainly in Johannesburg and Cape Town—and Johannesburg is daily taking over more from Cape Town as the real leading centre in this field now.'

'You seem to have been producing a lot of novelists recently', remarked Mr Wisley.

'Oh yes, English prose-writing has taken a step forward—with, Paton, Nadine Gordimer, Daphne Rooke, Dan Jacobson, Laurens van der Post, Peter Abrahams, and others. Novels and short stories have definitely gone ahead. Some new poets have appeared, too. But no great enthusiasm is shown about them yet. The best one we've produced, Roy Campbell, was recently killed in a car accident. Trouble is, many of our English writers leave the country when they achieve success. Nothing builds up here in English.'

'It's different in Afrikaans', said Mrs Sharp. 'There is a much more conscious attempt to build up a local literature in Afrikaans, and much more encouragement given to writers. Of course, as this is the only place Afrikaans is spoken in the world, there is not much temptation to go elsewhere and write it. Still there are a number of acclaimed and able poets in Afrikaans, the late Louis Leipoldt, N. P. van Wyk Louw, Dirk Opperman, Elizabeth Eyler, Uys Krige, Peter Blum, Ina Rousseau. We're not so good on the prose side, except perhaps for Elise Mulder and Franz Venter.'

'You must give me their names in the morning', said Mr Wisley. 'I'm sure I shall forget them now.'

Dick looked aside at Frank and Elise, who had both fallen very quiet. Elise had put her head against Frank and was fast asleep. Frank was nodding himself. Dick looked up at the stars which seemed to be dropping in a great slow waterfall behind Devil's Peak. Where, he wondered, did the wildebeest and the zebra sleep, under the trees or out in the open?



## *Chapter 14*

# THROUGH THE WINELANDS

It struck Dick upon meeting Meneer Thys Langeberg that there could hardly be a greater contrast than that between him and his brother-in-law, the Professor. Oom\* Thys, as the children called him, was short and stocky, deliberate and genial, much given to a hearty, deep laugh. He didn't seem comfortable in his collar and tie as he sat talking to Mrs Sharp in the drawing-room, and yet in his manner towards his sister, his nephew and niece, and Dick there was something deeply courteous and attentive. He spoke English as if he were picking his words carefully and had a curious way of making his 'r' sounds into a throaty 'g'.

'Listen to Oom Thys braying!' cried Elise a few minutes after he had arrived and she was hanging on to his arm.

'Braying?' exclaimed Dick, mystified.

'B-r-e-i, Dick—not b-r-a-y like a donkey', explained Mrs Sharp. 'If your father ever heard Field Marshal Smuts on the radio he'd have noticed that he had difficulty with his "r"s. All these Swartlanders and Malmesbury people do it for some unknown reason—even I do it when I speak Afrikaans.'

'Of course, the "brei" is the only thing that I and Slim Jannie had in common', said Oom Thys and laughed uproariously, his weatherbeaten face wrinkled and his brown eyes dancing. Mrs Sharp explained to Dick that Oom Thys was a Nationalist and that he was still very annoyed about being outsmarted by 'Clever Jannie'—as Smuts was known to many of his own people.

Oom Thys and his prospective guests had an early lunch as he was going to visit a friend at Paarl on his way to the farm. This, in itself, made their journey longer than the eighty miles it would normally have been, and to please them Oom Thys went by a very roundabout route. As they motored along lovely roads the beauty of the scenery increased the further they went. The mountains seemed to draw closer about them and the country

\* Oom means uncle, but is also used to address intimate friends.

to take on the atmosphere of those oak-surrounded eighteenth-century homesteads that Dick had seen on their tour with the Professor. Vines and farmlands stretched far away, even up the mountain slopes, and serene rocky peaks watched over them. Dick learnt that one particularly beautiful part was the French Hoek Valley, where many French Huguenot refugees had been settled towards the end of the seventeenth century. These fine people had brought with them to the Cape secrets of French wine-making and had helped enormously to improve viticulture—grape-growing—in South Africa.

Paarl itself had something of all the different kinds of scenery they had been passing through and Dick got a first impression of white houses, surrounded by oak trees, beside shady streets. Big vineyards reached almost to the centre of the rambling town, and spreading out on every side towards the mountain slopes were trees, vines and farmlands. Above the town stood Paarl Mountain, its peak crowned with three enormous boulders. The name of the town was really De Paarl, or as Afrikaners call it, Die Perel, meaning The Pearl.

‘How about taking Dick over the the K.W.V. headquarters, while I finish my business here?’ suggested Oom Thys. ‘Most of the people who come to Paarl like to see them. Frank and Elise have been before, so they can tell you all about it.’

‘What is K.W.V.?’ Dick wanted to know.

‘Short for Ko-operatiewe Wynbouwers Vereniging, the Co-operative Wine Growers’ Association of South Africa’, Frank told him, as they set out. ‘It’s generally called K.W.V. They’re the biggest wine firm in South Africa. Most of the Commonwealth buys its wine from them.’

‘They make scent, too’, said Elise.

‘Oh, they cater for all tastes’, Frank said as they walked towards the busy, huddled mass of broad buildings.

For more than an hour the three visitors, accompanied by a loquacious and entertaining guide, wandered through the cool dimness of some of the biggest wine-cellars in the world. They heard names such as leaguers, pipes, aums, half-pipes and hogs-heads and stared at vast quantities of barrelled wine and brandy ranged in racks along the walls. The barrels got bigger and bigger

until Dick saw what he thought must be the five largest barrels in the world—great oak-ribbed, brassbound goliaths, each containing thousands of gallons of wine. In another cellar, over which a peculiar silence seemed to hang, the children saw a great population of barrels in which brandy was being matured.

They learnt from their guide that South Africa was now exporting about two million gallons of wine and brandy every year. They saw barrels upon barrels of sherries, ports and other wines awaiting shipment to Canada and Great Britain. Britain was by far the Union's best customer for wine. They walked about on top of wine-wells which lay in specially constructed chambers under the floor and examined pumping machines which pumped wine along what looked like fire-hoses. Dick found himself wondering whether such common stuff as wine was ever drunk by anybody who worked on the premises.

Soon they were on the road again going towards Malmesbury. Frank told Dick that they had been, and were still, passing through an area which was a sort of meeting-place of mountains and it did look almost as though the crags and peaks and walls of rock were holding congress far over the little human heads at their feet. From this area, Frank said, the ranges went out to the east and following the coastline bent up to the north, ending in the Transvaal. In fact, the mountains formed a sort of second coastline separating the high and rather dry plateau of the interior of South Africa from the more moist and green coastal belt. There were towns like Stellenbosch, Wellington, French Hoek, Riebeck Kasteel, and Tulbagh in this region.

Before they reached the less picturesque town of Malmesbury the country began to flatten out, the mountains to withdraw to left and right and the vineyards to grow fewer and fewer. As soon as they had got beyond the town they passed into a country of rolling wheatfields and windmills, tin-roofed or thatched white farmhouses, and barns and haystacks with the mountains far away in the distance. The tops of the higher bits of ground which had escaped the plough were swarthy with a growth of dark bush.

'That's why they call it The Black Land, *Die Swartland*', Frank said when Dick remarked upon these hill tops.

It was getting on for sunset by the time they arrived in the

dusty earth streets of Moorreesburg, a rather bare little marketing *dorp* and shopping centre for the surrounding farmers. Oom Thys and Mrs Sharp had finished their schooling in the High School that could be seen on the top of a hill. In the streets, especially round the Co-op. Store, where everything, from tractor parts to sardines was sold, there was an extraordinary mingling of big tractors with enormous rubber tyres, wagons, mule-carts, cars, and plain, square little carts drawn generally by two splendid black horses.

'People are very proud of their animals here', said Oom Thys.

He seemed to know everybody and had a remark for each person they passed. The children learnt that one man was Oom Hennie Hanekom, whose third wife, Tant Helie le Roux, had been a rich widow. Another was poor Neef Danie Truter, who had just lost two cows and all his pigs from a new sickness. A third was that *skelm*,\* Japie Malherbe, who owed Oom Thys two bags of fertilizer from three years back. A fourth was Ernie Cloete who was trying out a new artificial animal feed. A fifth was Oom Dirk Rust who had just told the Predikant what he thought of him and his sermons. And there, walking slowly down the road, was old Tant Marie, wife of Oom Barend, who had handed over his farms to his sons and come to end his days in peace near a church.

After stopping for a few minutes to buy some fish from a coloured man with a lorry-load of big *steenbra*,† they drove on through the town into the sunset. The country became more open and bare, and sheep and oxen cropped among dry wheat-stalks in fallow lands alongside newly-ploughed earth. Frank told Dick that the main ploughing and sowing had already been done. It started just after the first rains at the beginning of May. Now in the thin gold light of sunset Dick could see a hint of green in the pale earth. There were trees only in little clusters far apart, generally round farmhouses or watching over the small cemeteries that were as much a part of the farm as the haystack or the wind-mill. Oom Thys explained that it was good to know that you would lie there one day, with four or five generations of your ancestors beside you.

\* Scoundrel.

† One of the many large edible fish caught in the rich fishing grounds off the coasts of South Africa.

## *Chapter 15*

# AMONG THE KORINGKRALERS

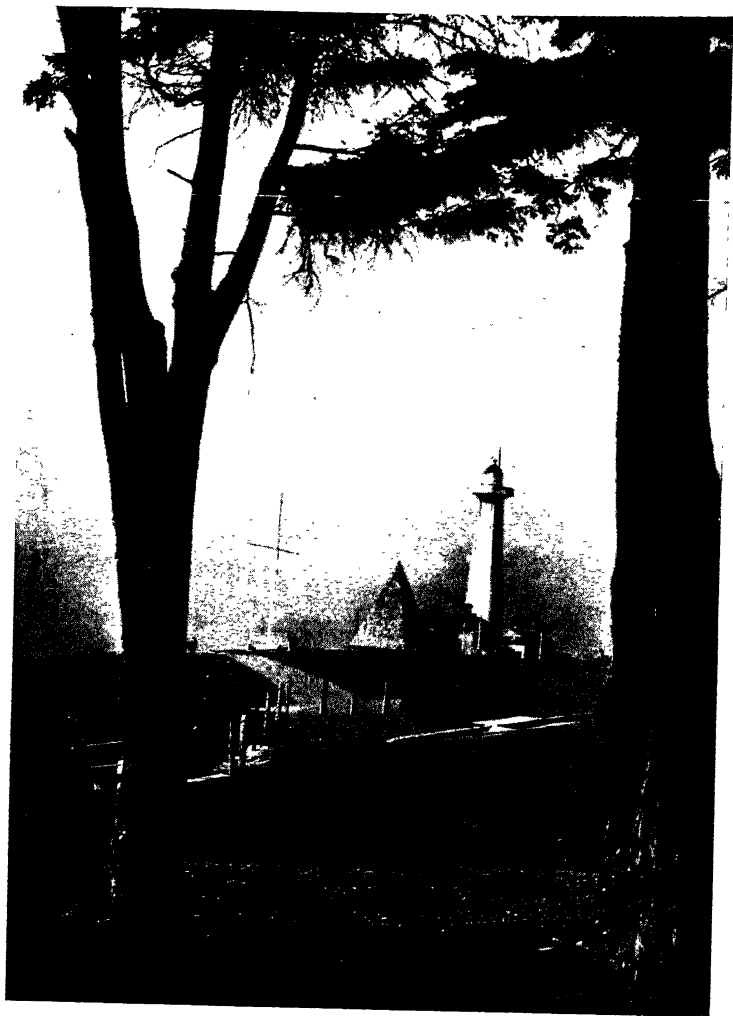
It was already dusk and the distant mountains were cut jaggedly against a violet sky when Oom Thys drove his car round the U-shaped group of stunted blue-gums and stopped in front of his farmhouse on 'Koringkraal'. 'Koring', Dick learnt, means 'corn', and 'kraal', means 'barn'. 'Koringkraal' really meant a 'grain-farm', and the people who owned and worked on these farms were known as 'Koring-kralers'. Tant Kittie, the wife of Oom Thys, was already on the stoep when the party from Cape Town arrived, and she bustled down the concrete path of her enclosed garden to welcome everybody, including Dick, with a hearty kiss. There was a good deal of kissing, for Elise and Frank kissed their two younger cousins, and Dick, shy as he felt about all this, was kissed in his turn by a ten-year-old boy and a little girl of twelve. He had hardly time to recover from his embarrassment before he found himself being led into the house through double-doors—one of insect-netting and the other of wood—by stout, round-faced Tant Kittie.

They went up a long passage and arrived in a big dining-room with riem-seated\* chairs round the table and a big wireless set in the corner. There was electric light, and Frank told Dick that nearly all the bigger farmhouses were supplied with electric power by a petrol-engine or a wind-charger. In next to no time food was brought in by a Coloured maid and grace was said. Thereafter, everybody fell to hungrily upon the grilled 'harders' or Cape mullet, eggs and meal-bread.

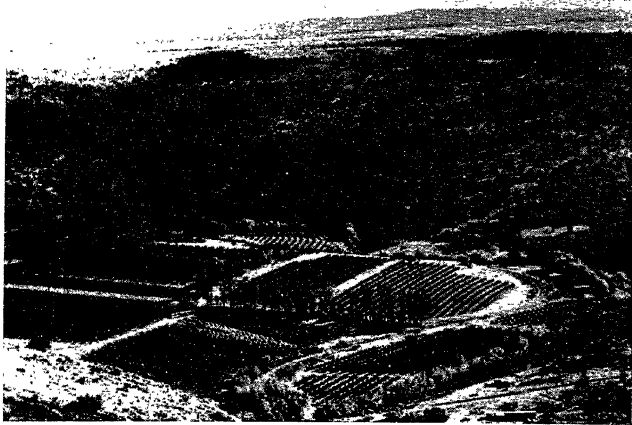
All through the meal everybody chattered away very happily. Most of the conversation was in Afrikaans but Oom Thys, Frank and little cousin Hannah talked to Dick in English. Tant Kittie made a speech to Dick in Afrikaans which Oom Thys translated.

'She says she wishes she could talk to you in English, but she's

\* Riem seat—a seat made of criss-crossed leather thongs.



*The lighthouse, right in the centre of Port Elizabeth, dwarfs the tiny pyramid built in memory of the Cape Governor's wife after whom the town is named.*



*ABOVE: Where oranges come from. On this citrus estate near Grahamstown, surrounded by a 'sea' of bush, the orange trees stand in long neat rows like soldiers on parade. BELOW: Grahamstown—a city of churches and schools.*

neglected all her opportunities to learn and she's too old and silly to learn now. But she'll understand anything you say to her.'

Little ten-year-old Barrie's English didn't amount to much more than 'yes' and 'no'. They continued talking for a long while over coffee after grace had been said again. Frank was apparently made to give an account of that 'learned, clever man' his father, and Elise had to give Tant Kittie all the news she could think of about her mother. At about half-past nine everybody went sleepily to bed, Dick and Frank sharing a big room and a double-bed.

The next morning Dick had a chance to look over the farmhouse. It was very dimly lit inside and there were heavy wooden shutters like hinged folding doors on the windows. The rooms struck Dick as having been built to keep out as much light as possible and Frank explained that it got so hot in summer that this was the only way of keeping the house cool. After a hearty breakfast of oatmeal porridge, eggs and some dried salt-fish called *bokkems*, Dick went out with Frank and Barrie. He found the building surrounded by spotless white-washed outhouses and a plantation of trees. On the outside of one of the walls of the long, zinc-roofed house a staircase went up to a loft in which seed and other supplies were kept.

'Come along and see how we farm in South Africa', said Oom Thys, coming up with the boys. 'I'm going to see a little bit of land I still want to plough.'

So Frank and Dick accompanied the farmer past the thatched cow-stalls and hay-shed, the hay-stack and the pigsties towards the tin sheds which housed the tractors and other wheat-growing machinery. Dick was surprised to see that the whole hillside, which gently sloped down to a trickle of water called the *sloot*, was covered with groups of buildings. The centre of each was a white-washed and thatched farmhouse of which not one was as big as Oom Thys's. Scattered about among these houses, though always at a respectful distance, were smaller, flat-roofed, two-roomed dwellings with small chimneys and windows, which Dick learnt belonged to the Kleurlinge, Gamats or 'Hotnots', as the Coloured farm labourers were variously known.

'Is this all one farm?' Dick asked, surprised at this small village.



## THE YOUNG TRAVELLER IN SOUTH AFRICA

'It's all Koringkraal but it's many farms', said Oom Thys. 'Once, long ago, in my great-grandfather's time, the country for miles around belonged to Oupa Langeberg. That was when a man could just walk out and choose six thousand *morgen* and live on it.'

'What's a morgen?' asked Dick.

'A morgen is a little bit over two acres of land', said Oom Thys.

'Well, that was how big Koringkraal was in my great-grandfather's days, two and a bit times six thousand acres. But, you know, when a Boer dies his property gets equally divided up among his children, not like you English people, where the eldest son gets all, if there is no will to the contrary. So Koringkraal is now shared out among many generations of Langebergs and this whole hillside is full of cousins.'

Two fine black horses, ready harnessed to a green square cart such as Dick had seen in Moorreesburg, were awaiting Oom Thys's arrival. An elderly Coloured man with a moustache and shrewd, humorous brown eyes was standing at their heads.

'*Dankie,\* Outa Koos*', said Oom Thys taking the reins and motioning Frank and Dick to climb up.

'*More, Baas! More, my Basies!*'† said the old Coloured man smiling paternally upon the two boys.

Dick noticed that the term 'Outa' was used in addressing other senior Coloured men he met during the day. Frank told him that Outa and Aia were general names for more elderly Coloured men and women respectively, Jong and Meid for younger Coloured people, and Klonkie and Klimmeid for little Coloured boys and girls.

As they drove along Oom Thys pointed out his fallow and sown lands, showed them what he was doing to stop soil washing away—for the Union had already lost a quarter of her best soil through erosion—and indicated which little green shoots were wheat and which were oats. The soil did not strike Dick as being very fertile. It had rather a tired look and there were many little white stones in it. Oom Thys shook his head over his lands and said that the amount of fertilizer a man had to put into his farm made him feel sorry he owned a farm. He seemed a bit anxious about the

\* Thank you.

† 'Morning master! Morning my little masters!'

direction of the wind, too, for it was blowing out of the wrong quarter and rain was already overdue. A drought at this stage might mean that the entire crop would be lost. It was little wonder, considering these risks and expenses, that South African wheat cost 40s. 6d. a bag—and cheap at the price, Oom Thys declared.

Dick pointed to one or two windmills he saw and asked if they didn't pump enough water to help to irrigate the wheat.

'No, the water they pump is too *brak*—it's got too much salt in it', said Oom Thys, and he pointed to the trickling stream at the bottom of the hills. 'Same as the water in the sloot. Only the cattle will drink it.'

They came to a point at last from which they could see the tractor rumbling towards them, trailing a cloud of dust. When the tractor arrived it was impossible to tell whether the driver or his assistant who rode behind on the plough were Coloured or White, so covered were they in dust and fertilizer. While Oom Thys went off to a team of mules pulling a plough a little further on, Dick and Frank mounted the board above the ploughing discs and rode behind the tractor. The plough fertilized the ground as it went along, and put down seed. Swaying to and fro on the board as it bucked over the ground behind the chugging tractor, Dick and Frank helped the dusty Jong to replenish the seed and fertilizer cannisters from the spare bags. As they did so fertilizer and dust blowing up from the turning discs covered them too, so that when they returned to their starting point Oom Thys could hardly tell his guests from his labourers.

'You'd better wash your new faces off in the sloot', Oom Thys said as they drove back to the houses, 'because just now I'm going to take you to meet some Cousin Langebergs for a cup of tea.'

'I can see Elise going the rounds of the Koringkralers with Hannah and Tant Kittie', Frank said pointing to a small group walking down the brown farm road towards one group of houses.

After Oom Thys had looked in at the stables, they walked over to see the first of the Koringkralers. In each house they went to they were given a hearty welcome by the usually stout housewife, who broke off her work—and they were always very busy—and

started a brew of tea. If the farmer was nearby she called him to come and meet 'die jong Engelsman'. Their kindly, bustling, voluble hostesses refused to listen to any protests that tea had been drunk before, and with tea there was always served either preserved oranges or melon, known as *konfyt*, or hard, white rusks called *beskuit*. In two of the houses Dick found that the tea had a strange taste and was thicker and richer than ordinary tea.

'This is bush-tea', Frank told him. 'It's made from South African bushes called *rooibos*. People overseas are beginning to like it now and they ask for more of it.'

There was only one other house that was anything like as big as that of Oom Thys. Most of them were built as if they had begun as one long thatched cabin, divided into kitchen at one end, bedroom at the other and dining-room in the middle. Then, as the family had grown, rooms had been added. The outer walls were always spotlessly white while the interior and the furniture had a scrubbed, polished look. The floors in these poorer houses were of hardened earth over which cowdung mixed with a little water was occasionally smeared and it dried into a hard, almost smooth surface. Pictures on the walls were always bad prints of Arabs on camel-back or very Victorian young ladies in drapery, or even worse, originals left by some wanderer.

If the farmer was nearby, working with his Coloured labourers, with the pigs, or superintending some work on the stables or machinery, he also came in to greet Oom Thys and his young guests. They drank tea in the dining-room or the kitchen, where they invariably found the mistress of the house, cutting up a pig to make Boer-sausage, or churning butter, or baking bread. Though the farmers were dressed in rough clothing—khaki and rough-leather boots worn without socks, and called *veldskoene*—they were all courteous and attentive like Oom Thys. They asked a number of polite questions about Dick's home, what his father did and how he liked South Africa. The talk, however, nearly always ended up in a very animated discussion in which Dick caught the word 'Predikant' time and time again.

'Why do they all keep talking about "the Predikant"?' asked Dick on their way home.

'We're all very excited because we have at last got a Predikant.\* Another district called our last Predikant away and so the elders of our church here had to send a "call" to another one. But the first three calls we sent were not accepted—I sometimes think our salary for the Predikant is too low. But now one is coming and we are very happy. It is not good to be without a Predikant and to have to borrow one from nearby to conduct our service on Sundays.'

'Who pays him his salary? The Government?' asked Dick.

'No. The Government has got nothing to do with the churches in this country', said Oom Thys. 'The *gemeente*—the congregation—pays him. It's terrible work sometimes to raise the money, especially when there's a drought. We have to have Thanksgiving offerings, collections, bazaars, concerts and all sorts of functions.'

When lunch time came round at about half-past twelve Dick's appetite was not as keen as it might have been owing to the vast amount of tea and preserves and rusks he had eaten. But the table before which he sat down was crowded with dishes. There was a leg of mutton, cooked almost to shreds in the way that the Afrikaners seemed to like their meat. There was chicken pastry. There were raw grated carrots, beetroot salad, beans in a thick sweetish gravy, flavoured with cinnamon, potatoes done in butter, pumpkin and cabbage. Even Dick had a second helping of one or two items, and everybody had an enormous meal, even for inhabitants of the Union, that country of big eaters. At the end of the meal there was still enough over for five or six helpings each for the two Coloured maids who worked in the kitchen. The meal was rounded off by a sort of rolled thick pancake served in a thin syrup.

Dick wasn't at all surprised that Oom Thys retired to rest after he had said grace. Frank, however, told him that the good Koringboer had been up since five in the morning. Hannah and Barrie took their young visitors outside and showed them small gardens they had planted for themselves under the trees. Dick had noticed that little effort was made by the majority of the Koringkralers to garden on account of the 'brakness' of the water

\* A Minister, as in the Presbyterian Church.

supply and the dryness of summer. Hannah's and Barrie's gardens, as well as that which even the smallest of the Coloured maids had planted beside theirs, was really nothing more than a few green shoots of flowers—quite a triumph to have raised from the hard, dry earth.

'Let's play *Aaispaai*', suggested Hannah, after a little while.

*Aaispaai*, which turned out to be an Afrikaans version of the English 'I spy', was an energetic form of hide-and-seek. While they were playing, other little White and Coloured children came and joined in. Dick was surprised to notice that during the game all distinction between the young Langebergs and the Klonkies and Klimmeide was forgotten. This happened whenever they played games, most of which were very similar to those Dick was used to in England. The Coloured children only separated from the others when Tant Kittie called them all in for tea and banana-bread. But the Coloured children were given mugs of tea and chunks of the cake outside the kitchen door.

After tea most of the Klonkies and the Klimmeide went off to help their parents with the feeding of cattle, horses and pigs, while the White children wandered off to help their mothers with such things as separating cream, collecting eggs and feeding the fowls. The few White boys and girls left played *jukskei* on a bare stretch of ground beside the sloop.

The *jukskei* pitch was pitted at both ends and softened by the fall of the *skeie*, which were made of wood and shaped not unlike Indian clubs. The pitch was about thirteen or fourteen yards long and was marked at each end by a thin wand about as high as a cricket stump. The object was to throw a *skei* from one end to the other, and to knock down the further wand. Each player was allowed a pair of *skeie* and two throws a turn.

'Which shall I choose?' Dick asked when he found that there were heavy and light pairs of '*skeie*'.

'The girls throw with the lighter ones', Frank said.

They divided into teams, first a member of one team throwing, then a member of the rival team. Each time a player knocked the wand down he scored three points for his side, but the tricky part of the play came when the team had scored nine. Before a team could continue into the second 'leg' of the game, it had to

score exactly eleven. However, to score a single point it was necessary to throw your *skei* so that it fell nearer to the wand, without knocking it over, than did the *skeie* of any of the opposing team. If you knocked the wand over in this attempt the score of three was made and your team carried beyond the aim of eleven points. In that case the whole team started from scratch again. At this stage the teams tried to get their *skeie* to lie nearest to the wand either to score for themselves or to prevent their rivals from scoring, or to tempt them to knock the wand over. If eleven points were obtained then the team passed on to score exactly twenty-two with the same penalty of returning to the beginning of the 'leg' if this score was exceeded.

Dick thoroughly enjoyed this game and he and Frank and Barrie continued playing till sunset. The players were a floating population, some drifting away and others coming up and joining in. Many of the older Langebergs stopped to take a turn in intervals between phases of farmwork. Some of the bigger boys from the High School in Moorreesburg, who were spending the week-end at home, were extremely expert players and knocked the wand down without effort. They also 'cut out' each other so finely that it was almost excruciating to watch the *skeie* landing nearer and nearer to the wand and knocking others out of their position. Mothers and sisters came along as well, but only to watch and laugh for a little while. Dusk came, and with it Coloured labourers for their evening tot of sour wine.

It was almost dark, it was getting chilly, and the frogs were croaking in the *sloot* when the game finally ended. Dick, Frank and Barrie wandered home by way of the pigsties and cattle-stalls, pausing to look at the grunting porkers sloshing about in their evening meal and the cows more sedately ruminating over theirs. Barrie led Dick and Frank towards the haystack where they found Elise and Hannah doing high-dives from the top into lower piles of straw. They joined in this for a while and finally reached the house looking rather like tramps.

All this activity had given Dick and the other children very considerable appetites. They devoured large quantities of eggs, grilled Boer-sausage, honey, butter and bread and spent the rest of the evening singing Afrikaner songs to the accompaniment of a

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banjo played by a bigger girl. Finally, they all retired wearily to bed at nine o'clock, as all Koringkraal's Afrikaner population seemed to do. The Coloured people were apparently having some jollification of their own, because when he stirred for a moment at about eleven o'clock Dick heard laughing, singing and arguing coming from the labourers' quarters. Much later he woke again to a lonely strumming of a guitar far away in the night. Sleepily Dick recalled a translation of one of Leipoldt's poems he had read:

On my little guitar  
With only one string  
I play in the moonlight  
Any old thing . . .

With the moon to listen  
And the nodding stars,  
I am champion of all who  
Play guitars . . .

What if they call me  
Daft or silly!  
If the river-reeds listen,  
And the lily . . .

On my little guitar  
One string to it now,  
I play in the moonlight  
Any old how.

## Chapter 16

### SUNDAY AND PREDIKANTS

Early Sunday morning was full of quiet bustle. Oom Thys, who was one of the elders of the church, appeared very carefully groomed and dressed in his black *manel*, a tail-coated suit something like an undertaker's, which he carefully covered with a long white coat to keep the dust off. Tant Kittie was also dressed in her Sunday best and a very sober black hat. A few Langeberg cousins, who had no transport of their own, joined Oom Thys, Elise and the family in the car and they all drove off to church in the dusty wake of many other cars.

'What's it like in the church?' Dick asked Frank, as they stood in the still sunlight watching the departing churchgoers.

'Very like the Presbyterians. There's an organ and pulpit, and the people sing psalms and hymns, hear a sermon and pray, and have a collection. The little church they've got at Koringberg, about five miles away, to serve this district, is really a sort of hall and church in one so that they can have meetings and functions there as well.'

'They don't have anything like Communion, then?' asked Dick.

'Oh, yes. That's called *Nagmaal*, Night Feast. They have it four times a year and it's a big occasion for everybody.'

Dick noticed that the Coloured people were also dressed very neatly, the women especially so, wearing clean *doeks*—head-cloths—and bright new dresses. They all seemed to be moving towards some central point lower down the Koringkraal hillside.

'There must be a Sendeling, a missionary Predikant here', Frank remarked. 'He's not exactly a full-blown Predikant, but he attends to the Coloureds and holds services for them in rotation at the various farms. Let's go and see them—I suppose the service will be held in Oom Frikkie Langeberg's big cart-shed.'

Dick and Frank walked down across the stony, clean-swept farmyards and past the sties where immense pigs were drowsily spending the peaceful morning in becoming more immense. Stand-



ing at the open doors of Oom Frikkie's cart-shed the two boys got a good view of the simple service held for the Coloured folk. The congregation was very devout and sang the hymns and psalms with great spirit in good full voices, the Sendeling intoning for them. During the sermon everybody sat on the ground and listened attentively to the preacher, who leaned over the back of a chair while he preached.

When Oom Thys returned, other Langebergs came into the kitchen to drink coffee and to talk mainly about the arrangements made to meet the new Predikant, who was arriving the following day. More visitors came in the afternoon, some from outlying farms and some from Moorreesburg, to discuss the same topic. Children accompanied their parents and Tant Kittie held a Sunday School class for them. No games were played and conversation was mainly serious although 'cheerfulness was always breaking in'. Finally, Frank, Elise and Dick paid one or two late afternoon visits to Langebergs they hadn't yet met. Sundays seemed devoted entirely to conversation, church-going and visits.

The following day Oom Thys woke the children with the welcome news that the car wouldn't start and he would not be able to get them to the *dorp* station in time to catch the train to Cape Town. They would have to go by a later train the following day.

'Then you can come to Koringberg with us and see our school and the new Predikant', cried Hannah on hearing this news.

Accordingly, after breakfast Dick found himself with a group of young Koringkralers standing on the hillside waiting for the school bus which went round the farms twice daily picking up and depositing the district's scholars. All the children had satchels and packets of sandwiches and, in addition, were specially bright and clean for the day's event. Everybody in the bus, a wheezy and rather shaky vehicle, was very talkative and hilarious and Dick found himself wondering how the driver could concentrate on his work amid such noise. Girls were teased and mock fights were started among the smaller boys. All the scholars were of primary school age; the little school at Koringberg had only one or two of the first classes in the secondary stage.

'They all *brei* like mad!' Frank said to Dick above the babble of high-pitched voices, 'although their parents try to stop them.'

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'Where do the Coloured children go to school?' asked Dick.

'Well, in some centres there are schools for Coloureds, but this centre is too small', Frank answered. 'Their own parents and the farmers' wives try to give the *Klonkies* and *Klimmeide* a little education, mainly by teaching them to read the Bible.'

The prominent buildings of the village, or *dorpie*, of Koringberg, were that of the Wheat Growers' Co-operative, a big corrugated storage-shed which stood beside the little railway station, the church-hall, the big house which awaited the coming Predikant, the long, single-storey school and a hostel. Other buildings were a tiny post office, a couple of general stores which sold anything from scrubbing-brushes and three-legged kaffir-pots to dark glasses and aspirin, and some dwelling houses. Most of the buildings stood in big, bare grounds shaded by rather scrubby trees. Clean, earthen roads divided the whole into square plots.

The coming of the children disturbed the calm of the *dorpie* for a while but they were soon assembled in their school-hall for the usual Monday morning's twenty minutes of Bible-reading, prayer and psalms. On the other days, Frank explained, boys and girl's formed into separate queues in front of their respective class-rooms and marched in, the girls going first. Naturally, Frank, Elise and Dick didn't join in the ceremony, Frank declaring that he hadn't escaped a day at school to watch other people in theirs. They wandered about looking at the sights of Koringberg and waiting for Oom Thys to arrive—he had been hard at work on his car when they left.

Soon cars, open carts and horses began to arrive. Everybody was very spruce for the function of the day and in a very cheerful mood. Koringberg soon presented a most active scene. When they learnt that the Predikant's train was near, a dust-churning procession of cars went out to meet him a little way outside the station, and to bring him in in triumph to the assembled community. There was a very excited welcome for the Predikant, who didn't wear the 'dog-collar' that Dick was accustomed to seeing, but merely a white tie with his black suit. Later, when he took part in a religious ceremony, he changed the white tie for a sort of white bib. He was given a great welcome.

Children marched in procession with banners, there were speeches, answering speeches, tea and cake.

Dick had never heard of the whole population turning out to welcome a new parson. He was rather astonished.

'He's more or less the centre of social life in the country districts, you know', said Frank. 'Afrikaners get together mainly about religion or politics.'

The Predikant was a dark-faced, thoughtful-looking man with an air of being quietly in authority over all the people about him. Although he must have got more and more tired as the celebrations proceeded, he continued to be attentive, affable and courteous to all, and everybody seemed determined to have a word with him.

Oom Thys took Dick and Frank back fairly early in the afternoon, leaving Tant Kittie and Elise to assist with some more tea-serving. He wanted to make up as best he could for a lost morning's work. They were very short-staffed as Coloured labourers were becoming scarcer.

'Why don't you get Bantus?' Dick asked.

'Kaffirs?' asked Oom Thys. 'The Kaffirs are mostly on the east side of the Cape and in the north. This is a "Coloured" part of the world. Tho' they do tell me there are lots of Kaffirs coming to Cape Town.' And Oom Thys shook his head as if he didn't particularly like the idea.

Back on the farm Dick and Frank helped the Outas and Jongs to feed the pigs and carry fresh straw to the stables and milk the cows. Frank also served out the little tin mug of sour wine, (*vaaljapie*), that each labourer got when he finished work. While all this was going on Dick noticed the perfectly free and friendly attitude of the Coloureds towards Oom Thys and his white *kneg*.

'We know how to treat our Gamats', Oom Thys said. 'Most of them have grown up with us. We don't give them such a lot of money but they get a house and meat and wheat in plenty—and even a little wine when they need it. It's enough to make a man happy if he keeps well.'

'Mind you, Oom Thys, a lot of them get tuberculosis', Frank said, and Dick remembered the little mounds of earth that lay outside the fenced tombstones of the Langeberg cemetery.

Oom Thys sighed. 'Ai, yes. It's a bad business. Sometimes I wonder if it's not the way they drink that gives it to them. But then somebody told me it's got to do with the salts being washed out of the soil and that makes the food poorer. Lots of white people get T.B. too.'

But when the workers had passed Oom Thys as they left work, crying, 'Nag,\* Baas Thys! Nag basies!' it did not seem to Dick that they looked either unhealthy or unhappy.

The next day Dick, Elise and Frank left the farm very reluctantly. It seemed that the train itself was anxious to let them stay as long as possible in the district for it was two hours late, a fact which surprised and annoyed nobody. When it did at length leave Moorreesburg it crawled unconcernedly through the Swartland as if giving a last lingering glimpse of the thatched roofs, barns and haystacks of the country to its English visitor. To sustain them on this journey the children had a hamper of thick sandwiches of egg, honey, and meat, cold sausage and slices of salted, sun-dried meat called *biltong* and finally some syrup-soaked cakes called *koeksisters* which Tant Kittie had prepared specially for the journey. In another basket they carried a plucked chicken, a ham and a great quantity of butter-milk rusks in addition to a few dozen eggs, a present from Tant Kittie to her sister-in-law.

They arrived in Cape Town about five hours after setting out from Moorreesburg, changing over to the fast electric service on the way.

\* Nag=night.

## *Chapter 17*

### CROSSING THE CAPE

The Wisleys left Cape Town reluctantly, and set off in a hired car to cross the Cape along the coastal belt or 'Garden Route'. Soon the slight homesickness Dick had felt as he watched Table Mountain sink down behind the horizon was lost in the excitement of the new scenes about him.

They had climbed Sir Lowry's Pass over the Hottentots Holland Mountains, seen the great curve of False Bay with other little harbours and bathing resorts spread out beneath them, run along through forested mountain areas past dozens of road-side fruit stalls, and descended at last into rolling country which seemed to be covered with yellowing wheat crops from the distant ranges on one horizon to the faint glimmer of sea on the other.

They were still running through ravined wheat-lands when a shabby man on the roadside thumbed them to a stop and asked for a lift to Mossel Bay. His chin was bristly, his collarless shirt-neck closed by an old brass stud, his suit threadbare, and his battered suitcase tied with a single strand of rope. But his voice was pleasant, and Mr Wisley told him to 'hop in'.

The passenger sank into the back seat with a sigh of pleasure, and off they went again.

"Taking up another job somewhere?" asked Mr Wisley.

"Who? Me?" The man sounded startled. Then he laughed. "No, I'm simply shifting to a new winter residence."

Mr Wisley and Dick digested this piece of information in polite silence. Their passenger coughed slightly and said: "Normally, I'd have moved round the coast to Natal long before this. The Cape winter's a miserable time. But it's delightful on the Natal South Coast, and there are still lots of patrons. People are always more generous on holiday."

"What delayed you, sir?" asked Dick.

"There's my boy!" exclaimed the stranger, delighted. "It's a long time since anybody called me 'sir' . . . Still, where was I? Oh, yes.

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I got a touch of T.B. and they shanghaied me into Westlake Chest Sanitorium and didn't let me out until the weather improved. It was very pleasant sleeping between clean sheets again—but a man gets restless. You start to wonder where your friends have got to.'

'Have you many friends?'

'Oh, the companionship's pleasant on the road—and on the beaches', said their passenger negligently. 'Once you've got used to it, sea sand is as good as any bed, even one with white sheets.'

'You were saying about the companionship. . .?' prompted Mr Wisley.

'Oh yes, Society may have kicked us out for one slight slip or another, but we're still good company. Gentlemen of the road is the right term all right. Good stiffening of professional men among us, hammered stock-brokers, disbarred lawyers, struck-off doctors, even a defrocked padre or two.'

Neither Dick nor his father dared ask what he had been. Possibly a lawyer, guessed Mr Wisley.

'Of course,' the tramp continued, 'there are a lot of the shadier characters, old lags and just plain bums. Just whining bores most of them. I'll buy you a farm in Eloff Street for every time you ever get good conversation among that kind. But you need never have a dull moment if you choose your friends properly.'

'You must all have had interesting experiences', agreed Mr Wisley.

'That's what I'm moving up for', said the tramp. 'It's for the company as much as anything. . .'

The Wisleys listened entranced to their new companion until they put him down some hours later near Mossel Bay.

Mr Wisley offered him five shillings but he refused it, saying, 'You've contributed your share towards my travelling expenses.'

They turned off to Oudtshoorn, and he waved them a gay goodbye with, 'Give my regards to the ostriches!'

They went to the big and pleasant dorp of Oudtshoorn by climbing one steep mountain pass and left it by descending another. Actually all they had done was step over the mountain barrier out of the coastal belt and into the beginnings of the Little Karoo and step back again.

The ostriches were what fascinated Dick most about that part

of the country. The first sight he got of them was as exciting as any. They had come suddenly upon a whole flock of these long-legged, long-necked birds running beside a fence with their strange piston-like leg action. Their big tail feathers bounced up and down in a comical way. As soon as they saw the car they trebled their speed and raced parallel with it at a tremendous pace. Mr Wisley slowly increased his speed and only when he was touching fifty miles an hour did he begin to pull away from the leading bird.

Their new passenger, a university student making a brief visit home, remarked, 'Those long legs of theirs are a dreadful nuisance too. They are always getting them entangled in something or another and breaking them. You can't mend the leg. All you can do is shoot the ostrich and make biltong out of it.'

Dick knew by now that biltong was sun-dried meat that South Africans were particularly fond of—made from buck, or beef, or, he now learned, of ostrich. 'Do they make a lot of it?' he asked.

'A fair amount', said the student. 'The Ostrich isn't as valuable a bird as when all the ladies of the world wore his feathers and Oudtshoorn was one of the richest districts in the Union. Then suddenly the ladies changed their fashions, and everybody here had thousands of useless birds. So the answer was biltong and ostrich-leather hand-bags.'

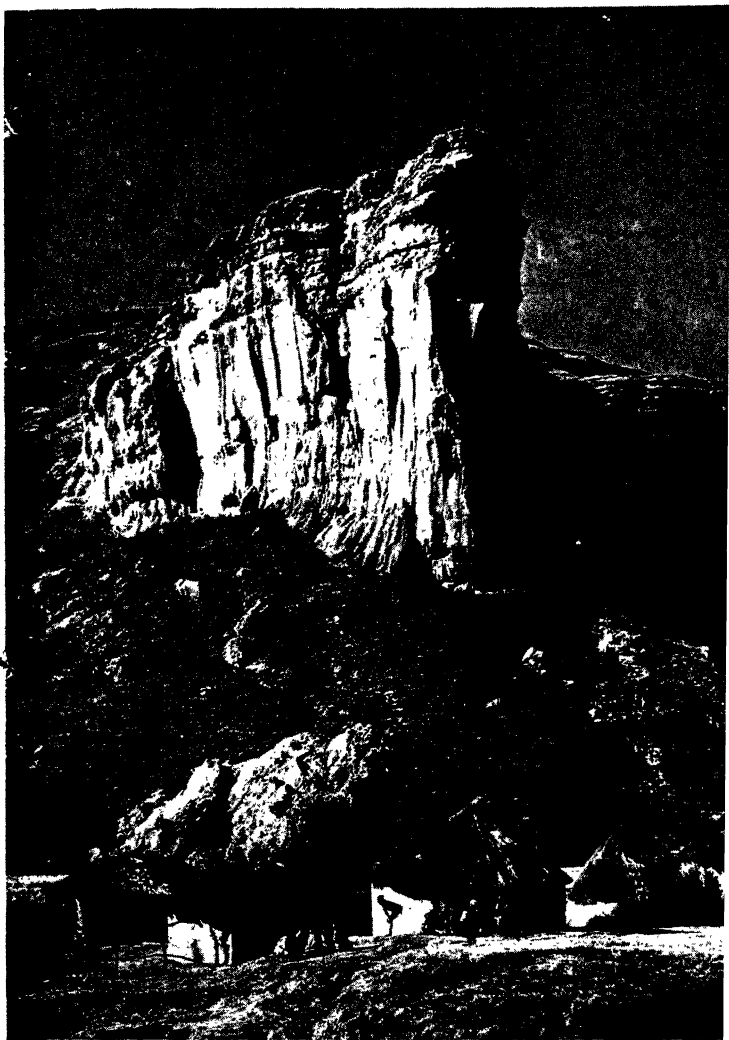
'Don't they use the feathers any more?' asked Dick.

'Yes, we supply the world with feather-dusters now.'

Dick really began to feel quite sorry for the ostrich when he and his father visited a farm and saw how its feathers were clipped. The big bird stood there with its head in a sock and lost its finery without so much as a muffled squawk. It seemed such an indignity for such a huge bird.

'As long as an ostrich can't see,' said the farmer, 'he doesn't worry about a thing.'

At the lovely town of George, which is about half-way along the garden route, they picked up another passenger as they left their hotel in the morning. He was a forestry officer anxious to get to Port Elizabeth quickly, and knew all about the forests through which they were soon passing. Forests stretched from the mountains in the north almost down to the shimmering blue ocean in the south.



*Native huts in the Drakensberg Mountains, Natal.*





*ABOVE: Durban was bright and busy, and very handsome, with its luxuriant tropical trees and plants along the streets. This is West Street, with the City Hall on the extreme left and the clock tower of the Post Office on the right.*

*BELOW: Part of the Indian market.*

'This is known as the Midlands Area, or more commonly Knysna Forests', he told them. 'It's about 110 miles long and ten miles broad running between the Outeniqua and Tzitzikamma Ranges and the sea. There are roughly 90,000 acres of forest, the biggest forest area in the Union.'

'All one particular kind of tree?' asked Mr Wisley.

'No, various kinds. They are all South African trees—of course, that is in the original forests. The forests were discovered by Europeans about 1750 and we've been slowly learning about them ever since. The tallest trees are the big yellowwoods, the type known as the common yellowwood reaching heights between 125 and 150 feet and having girths between twenty-five and thirty feet. The most abundant is the black ironwood. They called it that on account of the toughness of its timber. Then there's stinkwood. That's used a lot for furniture making and it's very valuable. Other trees are white pears, assegai, kamassi and the alders. Of course, the forests are generally a mixture of trees. The ground is covered with ferns.'

'Yours must be a very interesting job', observed Dick's father.

'Sometimes it's too interesting', said the forestry officer. 'There are elephants deep in the forests and they can make real trouble.'

Dick never saw any of the elephants but the scenery, the passes, and even the bridges were so absorbing that he forgot about them in the end. And in all the rivers and streams the water was the colour of beer.

'Makes you thirsty to look at it', said Mr Wisley.

'Some chemical the water washes out of the rocks', said the forestry officer.

At last they left the forest area and the green-backed Tzitzikamma Mountains. For the last hundred miles or so they ran along open hilly country, past occasional flocks of sheep, towards Port Elizabeth.

## *Chapter 18*

# PORT ELIZABETH AND THE 1820 SETTLERS

Dick never ceased to find Port Elizabeth a surprising place. The city had grown up round a 150-year-old little fort, which had been built on a high hill to command the wide blue waters of Algoa Bay. To one side the city spread out into beaches, bathing resorts, big hotels, and quiet tree-lined residential suburbs. On the other side it became increasingly car, tyre, cable, canning, shoe, and cement factories, long wool-warehouses, railway work-shops, and model housing schemes for the poorer Whites and the Africans. Out of the middle of the city rose a lighthouse to flash each night above the Union's biggest wool and motor-car port. And cutting Port Elizabeth clean in two was a whole river valley kept as a nature reserve.

Dick and his father stayed at a ten-storey hotel with a roof-garden at Summerstrand, but they did have a kind of fifteenth cousin in the town. He was Jimmy Collett, who owned a sunny and flag-hung service station with Black petrol-pump attendants in green-and-gold uniforms. Jimmy was also a member of the city council and very city-proud.

'We're well ahead of other South African cities in a lot of things', he said, referring especially to the river valley reserve. 'We put aside the reserve before anywhere else even thought of what they call "fresh air lungs" today. We showed everybody what could be done about encouraging industry, when other places thought of factories as just nasty and smelly. And we led the whole Union in building proper townships for the Africans. The whole of Africa, in fact.'

Then Jimmy paused and smiled.

'We had to. We had a shocking slum here they used to call "The Worst Slum In The World". Terrible things went on there—murder, dagga-smoking, witch-doctoring', he said. 'But that was twenty years ago. It doesn't exist today.'

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'Was that where all those neat housing schemes and little gardens are now?' asked Dick.

'Round about there', said Jimmy Collett.

He fell silent looking out to the blue sea they could see shimmering in the distance from his office window. Then he said: 'I always say we led in all these things because the 1820 Settlers landed here.'

'Who were the 1820 Settlers?' asked Dick.

'Very important people for South Africa', said Jimmy Collett, 'and there are 250,000 of us in the Union today who are proud to be their direct descendants.'

He was obviously a little moved. He pointed towards a very tall, pencil-shaped brick building at the harbour entrance. 'That's the Campanile. We put it up on the spot where they landed.'

'The 1820 Settlers were the first big batch of English immigrants to South Africa', Jimmy Collett told Dick as they sat down again to drink tea. 'There were nearly five thousand of them and they were brought out by the British Government under false pretences. They thought they were coming to a land flowing with milk and honey and they found themselves in wild country with here and there a ruined farmhouse, Kaffirs in the bush and absolutely virgin land to start on. In fact nobody really knew what the land would or would not grow. And hardly any of the settlers, mark you, had ever seen a shovel or a plough or an ox in their lives. They were artisans, half-pay officers, demobilized soldiers, weavers, professional men, blacksmiths and so on.'

'But what made the Government do that?' asked Dick.

'They were having Kaffir War after Kaffir War. Somewhere beyond Grahamstown the Xhosas (or Kaffirs) coming down the East met the Boers coming from the West. The Xhosas liked raiding across the Fish River and making off with the Boers' cattle, and murdering a Boer or two into the bargain. Naturally the Boers retaliated. The British Governor thought he would get more peace there if he could have more White people living in the border area round Grahamstown and down to the sea. The Boers always believed in living as far apart as possible, and were a temptation to the Xhosas to raid. So out came the 1820 Settlers to take part in this experiment. They did not know they were expected to be a sort of boundary wall of flesh and blood.'

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'There must have been a dreadful muck-up!' Dick said.

'There was', Jimmy informed him. 'The settlers had blight in their crops for three years running, floods swept away their houses in the fourth year, Kaffirs began to steal their cattle and sheep a little later, and finally wars broke out between Black and White. No wonder numbers of the settlers ran away to the towns. But there were many others who were tough and optimistic in spite of it all and they stuck everything and became prosperous farmers. I think that these first Englishmen who battled against the climate and soil of South Africa and won are as great in their way as the Voortrekkers of 1836.

'They brought a new spirit to the Eastern Province', Jimmy went on. 'In the first place the Province became a more settled area after their arrival. There were new artisans for the towns and greater numbers of people to sell things to. Port Elizabeth and Grahamstown and Uitenhage began to grow. The whole area began to be looked upon as more than a fresh series of cattle pastures. It began to be treated as a land to be experimented with for purposes of agriculture and trade. And there's another thing. The English settlers brought with them a different idea of freedom.'

'The Boers seem to have had some ideas about freedom, too,' Mr Wisley observed laughing.

'Yes, the Boers did have a great idea of liberty—a kind of outside freedom, if you see what I mean', Jimmy explained. 'I mean the old Boer was all for being left alone and not being interfered with by anybody. That's what he went looking for on his Great Trek which started from this same area in 1836. He wasn't so strong on the *inside* idea of freedom, of making freedom inside the circumstances in which he found himself. He was always wanting to break the circumstances down or trekking off somewhere else. But the English were a little different, perhaps because they had just "trekked" 6,000 miles from England. They started hammering away for the freedom of the press, for instance, and they got it in 1826. Newspapers grew up which gave people a better idea of what was going on. People began agitating for more voice in local affairs. Arguments started over educating the Kaffirs, freeing the slaves and regarding the Hottentots as equals. I don't say these things hadn't happened before, but now, after

the arrival of the settlers, English ideas of freedom began to work in that way more actively'.

One of the greatest material benefits the 1820 Settlers brought to South Africa was their development of sheep farming and the wool industry. Today wool stood next to gold as the single industry which brought the most wealth to the Union—sometimes as much as £60 million a year.

Jimmy Collett took Dick and his father along to the Wool Exchange. They sat in the little gallery looking down over the sloping tiers of seats where wool buyers from all over the world were bidding for South African wool clips. None of the wool was to be seen—that had all been looked at in the North-End warehouses by the buyers already. A white-coated auctioneer merely mentioned the lot number of the bales, and then there was a rapid fire of bids, jumping up in farthings, half-pennies, and pennies.

Dick marvelled at the way the auctioneer was able to follow the quick mutter of offers, and pick out the man who had bid the highest when it ended. Those differences of pennies and half-pennies sometimes meant hundreds or even thousands of pounds sterling to the farmer.

Up in the gallery beside the Wisleys the big heavily built sheep farmers and their wives sighed, for it was a bad year as far as prices went. 'But I remember', said Jimmy, 'the first year somebody got over a hundred pennies a pound for his wool, the excitement was so great that a farmer's wife screamed.'

It was Mrs Collett who took Dick to one of the most exciting places in Port Elizabeth, the 'Snake Park', a little zoo full of snakes.

In this 'park' Dick spent a thrilling hour. It was a brick building and consisted of a sunken grassy quadrangle with some tall reeds in the middle, divided from a walk around it by a small moat of water and a wall. It was a little cold when Dick and Mrs Collett arrived and the snakes in the grassy quadrangle were sluggish and sleepy. They lay about in the open, coiled and entangled in some small bushes or draped lethargically across the reeds. Many more, Mrs Collett told Dick, were inside the square hives that stood on the lawn. The snakes were all lengths and combinations of colours.

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There was more activity among the reptiles when a tall Bantu came along, put a ladder in place and calmly climbed down into the green square. The Bantu was equipped with high rubber boots and thick leather gloves. Even so Dick felt nervous for him when he saw the snakes all round him rearing their heads and hissing and striking. More vicious than the rest was a semi-circle of waving, flat-hooded yellow cobras who hissed and struck and twisted in unison, keeping their wicked little eyes fixed on the attendant wherever he moved. The fat, beautifully coloured brown puff adders seemed more tolerant, but they too struck occasionally with their peculiar sideways motion. Undeterred by this hostility, the attendant opened the hives and began to pull out handfuls of snakes, rather like locks of Mænads' hair. These he threw down on the grass, and they wriggled away in all directions. Then the attendant began to demonstrate the different kinds of South African snakes. There were vivid red and black coral snakes, the green lash-like boomslang which was as poisonous as the dreaded black mamba, the white-ringed ringhals, the dark night adder and a number of other venomous, spitting, fanged reptiles.

Though the attendant handled the snakes apparently without fear Dick noticed that in showing them to the crowd of spectators he always grasped them fairly near the head. He allowed a cobra to spit on his glove and showed the smear of poison on the palm, declaring that there was enough venom there to kill half-a-dozen good men. He demonstrated how the ringhals spat his poison and bared the long, needle-like fangs of a puff adder, which he claimed could pierce his rubber boots. Dick nervously touched the body of a harmless molesnake that the attendant held up and found it was cold, soft and slithery. The sight of all these entangled snakes left Dick feeling slightly sick. Yet many were beautifully marked and coloured and, swimming in the water, they were unimaginably graceful.

While they were walking over to see the python Dick asked the attendant if he had ever been bitten by a snake. The black man smiled.

'Oh yes. Three times', he said. 'But the snake-bite serum we make here is very good. It saved me every time. We send it all over Africa.'

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'Gosh!' Dick said. 'Didn't you feel awful?'

The attendant laughed. 'I did feel pretty sick. Especially the first time', he said cheerfully. 'But they say the more you are bitten the better you can overcome the poison. In the old days the Bushmen used to make themselves immune by putting a little poison into their blood and then a little more, and so on. Soon they could take a full snake-bite without feeling any ill-effects.'

Among the oddest objects in Port Elizabeth were its monuments. The Horse monument, the Pyramid and the Campanile were all rather original. The Horse Memorial was dedicated to the horses which fell in the Boer War and consisted of a piece of granite on top of which stood the statues of a horse and an attendant 'Tommy'. The drinking troughs around the base of the pedestal were used no longer as there were very few horse-drawn vehicles left on the roads. Dick was very much impressed by this monument.

The Pyramid was so dwarfed by the big white lighthouse alongside it that it had to be pointed out to Dick. But for a long time it had stood in sad loneliness looking from its hill-top across the Bay to India. In that land the young and beautiful Elizabeth Donkin, wife of an early acting-Governor of the Cape, lay buried. Her husband with his heart, 'still wrung with sorrow', as the monument said, had raised this pyramid to her memory on the other side of the Indian Ocean. Port Elizabeth took its name from her, and lovingly preserved her monument.

Port Elizabeth citizens were less reverent about the Campanile. They told the Wisleys apocryphal stories about the electrically operated carillon of bells that had been placed in the very top of the tower. At first, they said, it could only play 'God Save The King', which it did at all sorts of extraordinary times. And Dick found some wag had written at the very top of the hundreds of steps to its turret, 'Nearer My God To Thee!'

But still the tower reared up to guard the memory of the old settlers whose region Dick and his father next set off to see.



## *Chapter 19*

# ORANGES AND EDUCATION

From Port Elizabeth the Wisleys drove through the Eastern Province on the first stage of their 600-mile drive up the coast to Natal. They were accompanied by a travelling salesman of a firm with which Mr Wisley had many dealings. At first the dark bush around them became denser and more entangled as they went on. Here and there a single fiery-poker flower of an aloe or three or four of them on a stalk like a branched candle-stick, thrust up into the sunlight out of the shadowy undergrowth. Soon the travellers made their first call—at a large citrus estate.

The estate was a charming island of orchards, trees, fields and houses, lying spread out beside a winding river-course. As the visitors looked down at the valley in which it lay enclosed by high, bush-jacketed hills, they caught glimpses of diagonal rows of squat, dark-leaved trees from under whose leaves peeped yellow points. The traveller, Mr Johnson, told them something of the history of the farm as they went down to the buildings at the bottom of the hill.

'People used to come here to take the waters, because the springs that supply that irrigation dam over there'—he waved his hand towards a big stretch of water over on the right—'are hot sulphur springs. Then the place was owned by an Indian Army General, who had left the area as a runaway boy and returned to it a famous man. He built a mud-and-brick replica of Balmoral Castle on it, and lived in regal state, entertaining the neighbourhood at banquets at which the guests were served by Indian attendants. Later it was owned by another English farmer who planted some oranges, and finally it fell into the hands of Sir Percy Fitzpatrick, who began its present development. His daughter and her husband own it now.'

The estate office turned out to be in the remaining wing of the old General's 'Balmoral Castle'. There they were met by the secretary, who declared that he needed a break and volunteered

to show them round the farm. First they visited a warm, bubbling spring, in a man-made defile in a hill-top. Its outflow was taken by furrow to the dam. At the dam they saw other furrows which, when the water was turned on, led it away to the orchards. From a main furrow others branched off carrying the water to different groups of the sixteen thousand trees.

The orchards themselves were divided from one another by thickly planted rows of Spanish reeds and lines of tall, beautifully straight blue-gums. These reeds and trees served as wind-breaks, for the Eastern Province suffered a great deal from the whipping, irritating south-easter and hot, northerly berg wind—so called because it comes from the scorched interior, bringing with it the heat of the mountain rocks ('berg' means 'mountain')—which shrivelled plants and gave people nervous headaches. The orchards were extremely well kept, the trees standing like regiments parading in open order. Black pickers were moving along the rows of trees in some of the orchards, picking the big yellow fruit and putting it into 'lug-boxes'. These boxes were taken away by lorries every now and then.

At the secretary's invitation, Dick went up to a tree where a big Black man with a face rather like the 'Laughing Cavalier' was at work, and picked himself a really big navel orange. He ate it warm from the tree, and found it sweet and juicy, better than any orange he had ever tasted.

'The best of the oranges now being picked are being taken in shiploads every week to Great Britain', the secretary told him.

A little square mud-bank surrounded each tree and Dick discovered that this was for holding the water when the gangs were irrigating the orchards from the furrows. They passed irrigators at work—Black men in big rubber boots leading the water along the furrows to the trees. Each orchard was given the equivalent of three inches of rain a month. The secretary remarked that most oranges in South Africa were grown by irrigation because the necessary amount of sun and rainfall were hardly ever found together. They looked at the little river whose water-course went through the farm alongside the orchards, and found it to be a series of standing pools interspersed by reedy beds full of rounded boulders.

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'This stream comes down in flood for about a fortnight every year', said the secretary. 'But you can see, from what it's like now, how little we could depend on natural water-supply if we didn't have the sulphur springs.'

After motoring for a few miles between tall trees, orchards, lucerne fields and Spanish reeds, they went in to the big pack-house. Here they saw an astonishing Heath Robinson contraption. Natives fed oranges on to a slope of whirling round brushes which polished the fruit and pushed it forward on to canvas shelves continuously moving in front of sorters, who sat on a long raised dais, rather like judges in court.

In a way they were judges, because it was their job to select the different oranges for export, or for the local market, and to discard others not worth offering for sale.

As the unending procession of yellow fruit rolled in front of them, the sorters threw the oranges on to the respective moving bands, which took the fruit to wooden furrows. Here different-sized openings automatically graded the fruit and passed it to the packers or dropped it into waiting hessian sacks. The sorters and the girl packers were White, and moved at a dazzling speed. There were Black men working at a more leisurely pace, removing the hessian sacks when they were full, taking away the boxes of wrapped and packed fruit, and loading them on the waiting lorries. Outside, little Black boys were loading up their donkey-carts with 'culls'—discards, but still very good to eat.

'How long does it go on like this?' asked Dick's father as they stood watching inside the great shed.

'Full blast? From about the middle of May to well into November', answered the secretary. 'We start with the Navels and the grape-fruit first and then on to Valencias, with a few Mediterranean Sweets—all names of oranges, except grape-fruit', he explained to Dick.

'Do they all go to England?' asked Dick.

'Most of them. We're one of England's greatest suppliers. By "we",' added the secretary, 'I mean the citrus growers of South Africa, of course. The citrus growers in the country pool their crops and the Citrus Exchange, a co-operative organization, directs where the oranges are to go—locally or overseas.'

'What do you do for the other part of the year?' Dick asked. 'I expect you have a rest then?'

'Lord, no! The battle with pests still goes on, and fumigation of the trees has to be done regularly. The ground has to be manured and fertilized. Irrigation has to be kept up scrupulously. Arrangements about labour for the following season have to be made—and so on. It's a constant struggle against man and nature.'

'What about the packers? Do they live here all the time?' asked Mr Wisley.

'No. They come for the season and stay at a hostel here that's run for them. For the rest of the year they do other jobs, or go to other citrus areas or simply take a long rest at home', answered the secretary. 'Many of them are the wives of the foremen and the sorters.'

They finished the tour by having a cup of tea in the big book-lined drawing-room of the spacious and comfortable farmhouse. The owners were away at that time but they were entertained by a learned caretaker and his wife. Before they left they walked over the lawns in front of the broad stoep and inspected the guava, mango and paw-paw trees at the side of the house. To Dick's disappointment they found that none of the fruit could be eaten. The big paw-paws were unripe, hanging down under their umbrella of leaves like green Rugby balls, the mangos and the guavas had ripened and had been taken away some time before. The caretaker explained that these fruits, with the exception of guavas, grew best in Natal, the really tropical part of South Africa.

They spent a little time in Uitenhage, a small, fairly neat town against a distant background of mountains, and with new factories being built on its outskirts. Then they passed on to the Sundays River Valley. The Wisleys were taken to a hill-top by Mr Johnson and they had a view of a considerable part of the Sundays River settlement. They saw orchards, lucerne fields, ploughed lands and big irrigation furrows and neat farmhouses stretching away into the distance.

'This was all bush, like the stuff we've been passing through, until about the time of the 1914-18 War', Mr Johnson told them. 'Then old Fitzpatrick had the idea of clearing it and developing

it. So big dams were built way back in the hinterland to store the water in the Sundays River. Irrigation furrows were made and bushes torn up. This is the result. If you think of the irrigation on the estate we saw this morning and imagine it over square miles instead of square yards, you get an idea of what this scheme is like and how it works.

'Of course, there are many irrigation schemes in the Union. And there are more huge schemes being planned now. Some were opened up by the Government and others were opened up by rich men with imagination', the traveller went on. He added ruefully, 'We don't get so many rich men with imaginations these days. Their sons have inherited their cash and they think money's just something to make yourself comfortable with.'

They crossed the Sundays River and spent the night at an hotel at Addo, a place whose bush was still ranged by a small herd of protected elephants. They arrived at about sundown and Mr. Johnson introduced some of the local farmers to the Wisleys. Dick noticed that quite a number spoke English without the South African accent and had a rank of some sort—Major This, Commander That, Captain The Other.

'Oh yes, lots of the people round here are retired Army and Navy people', explained the salesman. 'And they make pretty good farmers too—after they've spent most of their money and had all the disappointments of South African farming. A number of people here have come out under the auspices of the 1820 Settler Association and get a little training and advice. But settlers have generally still got to learn the hard way.'

There were still traces of bush, and the aloes flamed dully here and there as they approached Grahamstown the following morning, but the countryside had a more cleared look as if it had been longer under cultivation. Dick realized that they were passing through some of the country where the early English settlers had made their great struggle against nature and circumstances. Fields, herds of cattle, and pleasant farmhouses surrounded by trees became very frequent, and in the present peaceful atmosphere it was difficult to picture the trials and sorrows of the past.

The country became more and more hilly, and finally they drove up a road through trees that climbed the side of a massive hill,

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higher than anything else Dick had seen along the road. After running gently downhill again alongside plantations of fir trees stretching up to a high ridge of ground, they came to a view of Grahamstown, lying in its irregular bowl of hills, or rather resting in a bay of tree-covered heights which was shut off by a great bare ridge.

'The old City of Saints!' said Mr Johnson, affectionately. 'They've got as many churches here as they've got schools, and that's a fair number.'

He explained that this little city of 20,000 White, Coloured and Black inhabitants was the capital of the Eastern Province—although it had only one-sixth the population of Port Elizabeth. It was also the educational centre of the Province.

'You ought to feel very much at home here, too', added the salesman, 'because it's got the most English atmosphere of any town in the Union.'

'Why, Dad, this is where Uncle Willie's two sons are at school—you know, the mine manager's', said Dick. 'I can't quite remember the school's name.'

'Well, I was at school here and can give you a list straight off', replied Mr Johnson. 'There's St Andrew's College, connected with the Church of England and one of the best known boys' schools in the Union. Then there's the Jesuit college—St Aidan's—for Catholic boys only. Other boys' colleges are Kingswood and Graeme. There's also Rhodes University College. And a Women Teachers' Training College run by Anglican nuns. The last two are the most important places for higher education in the Province. Then there are girls' schools—a big Girls' High and a Diocesan School for girls, and a convent. There's a technical college, too, and a number of other educational institutions.'

This prepared Dick and his father for the academic surroundings in which they soon found themselves. Practically the first buildings they passed were the white, three-storeyed hostels of the University, lying back from the road behind big lawns and gardens. Then came an art school and a picture gallery, more stone buildings, towers and playing fields. Unmistakable schoolmasters, students in gowns and scholars in caps mingled with the usual business folk on the pavements. Even the streets had a

quiet, almost scholarly appearance. The main street was broad and divided by monuments, trees and narrow lawns. At one end of it could be seen the white clock tower of the University and in the square at the other end rose the shaggy, russet-coloured, tall-spired St George's Cathedral. All day there was the sound of bells ringing softly, announcing hours and quarter hours, and calling scholars to classes and students to lectures.

It was like Sunday morning in an English village, Dick thought.

## *Chapter 20*

# FORTS OF YESTERDAY AND SCHOOLS OF TODAY

It took Dick some time to find Uncle Willie's eldest son because he had to locate the right House in St Andrew's College first. He found him at length—a broad, black-haired boy of fourteen who showed his visitor round the College's playing-fields, gymnasiums, swimming-baths and other Houses and then suggested that they collect his two young brothers from the preparatory school for tea. Dick finally found himself in the company of three boys in boaters and blazers, with the blue St Andrew's cross on the pockets, strolling round Grahamstown.

The eldest Blackson boy was apologetic because he said there was so little to see. He was very disparaging about the dreamy out-of-dateness of Grahamstown and lamented that he had to spend the 'best years of his life' cooped up so far away from the dazzle of Jo'burg. But he was proud of Grahamstown's warlike past, when it had been the military headquarters for operations against the cattle-lifting and plundering Xhosas.

'Things happened here then!' he sighed. 'Like the Battle of Grahamstown, for instance, just before the Settlers came. Though why anybody wanted to fight a battle over a backveld place like this beats me.'

Young Blackson pointed out a sort of bump on the bare ridge at the other end of the town and told Dick that it was called Makanna's Kop. On it had stood the great Xhosa witchdoctor-prophet to direct the attack of 10,000 Xhosa warriors with their assegais and hide-shields upon the little forts containing altogether 270 English riflemen. The attack had failed, with the death of only three Englishmen and the loss of over one thousand Black warriors on the Xhosa side.

A monument in High Street commemorated the brave deed of a woman during this action. One of the forts was running short of



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gunpowder and a sergeant's wife, remembering that the Xhosas very rarely interfered with women even if they strayed on to the field of battle, offered to go across to another fort and get fresh supplies. She calmly walked out among the dancing and enraged savages and, completely unmolested, finally brought back the needed gunpowder.

Even the Anglican Cathedral and the Catholic Pro-Cathedral had been refuges in later troubles with the Xhosas, and had housed terrified women and children and wounded men.

'But it's all changed now', said young Blackson, sadly. 'Nothing ever happens around here these days and the place is stiff with schoolmasters and parsons.'

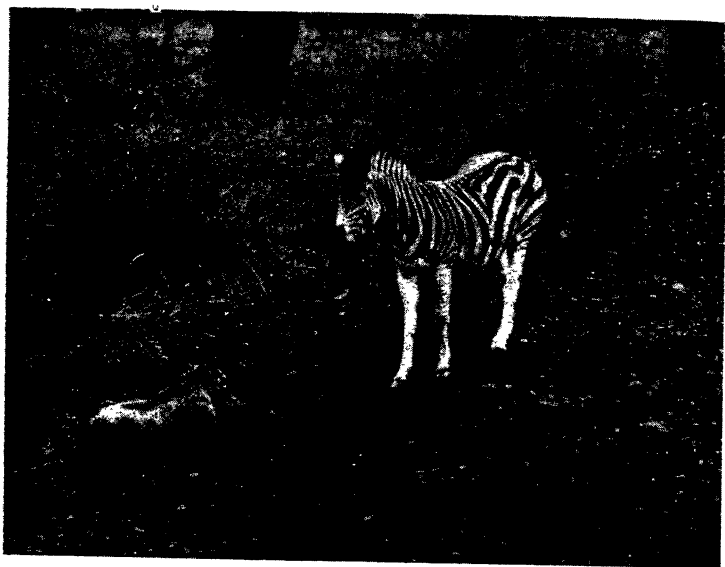
And to show how completely the good old days had vanished young Blackson took Dick to the site of old Fort England and pointed out that a lunatic asylum now occupied it. Then he took him to tea in a café which had also been a fort. From old military kitchens came a delightful snack of tea and scones which the younger Blacksons proposed repeating, only to be quelled by the stern eye of their elder brother who had insisted on standing the treat.

As the Wisleys journeyed further on into the country from which the savage hosts of the Amaxhosa once poured, ready to kill and plunder, Dick was constantly reminded of young Blackson's gloomy statement that 'things had changed'. Along their route the bush still prevailed, but they caught sight of peaceful farmhouses every now and then and they wandered through dreamy little country towns—Fort Beaufort, Alice, King William's Town—that scarcely a century before had been scenes of blood and struggle. Dick also discovered that the forts of Grahamstown were not the only ones which had suffered change with the passing of time. A most notable change had taken place at Fort Hare.

Just outside Alice, and watched distantly over by the grim Amatola Mountains, where the Xhosa warriors used to lurk, the buildings of the South African Native College now surround the remnants of Fort Hare, at one time the largest fortress on the frontier between the old Cape Colony and the land of the Bantu. Today, in the neat double-storeyed, tile-roofed, whitewashed establishment, Bantu, Coloured and Indian students are prepared



*Zebra and wildebeest disturbed while drinking at a waterhole in the Kruger National Park.*



*In the Kruger National Park. ABOVE: A giraffe has to bend his knees carefully to get a drink. BELOW: A wart-hog with 'its solemn, carbuncled face and tail like a tassel' is stared at curiously by a young zebra.*

for university degrees by White and Black professors and lecturers. Hostels, lecture halls, libraries and laboratories dominate the area.

Mr Johnson gave Dick and his father some of the history of the college. It was the natural outcome of the big educational institutions the missionaries had started at such places as Healdtown and Lovedale, where hundreds of Bantu students received primary and secondary education every year. Although the big universities like the University of Cape Town and Witwatersrand University opened their doors to non-Europeans they were predominantly White universities and far too expensive for Black people to attend. So there grew up in this area, which might be called the educational centre for the Bantu, the South African Native College, which offered higher education to the Black man at the modest fee of £50 a year, including tuition, hostel lodging, food and medical attention. The college is now to come under the Native Affairs Department. This is part of a move to provide two or three non-White universities, and thus separate all White and Black students.

They spent a day and a night in Alice, and as Mr Wisley was most interested in the College they went out there. They discovered that the students were away on vacation but that over 150 White, Black, Coloured and Indian people concerned with Bantu education were holding a 'refresher' course under the education section of the college. Lectures were being given by such well-known South African figures as Dr S. Biesheuvel, Director of the National Bureau for Personnel Research, and Dr E. G. Malherbe, Principal of the expanding Natal University, which is the European University catering for a very large number of non-European students. Students of different colours mingled freely in their eagerness to study African educational problems and Mr Wisley remarked that he thought the college was one of the most important things he had seen during his stay in the Union.

They made friends with a Bantu man teacher, a graduate of the college and a very soft-spoken, polite person, who was principal of a Bantu primary school in the Transvaal.

'Teachers who have taken their degree at Fort Hare are to be found in many parts of Africa', said this teacher, whose name

was Claude Letempe. 'Of course, the college doesn't turn out only teachers—people who take their B.A. or B.Sc. and Union Education Diploma. It turns out interpreters, who work in the law courts and departments of justice, and medical aids, who become hygiene officers in native areas, working with the public health departments. Then the Government needs agricultural field experts to teach the Bantu people new farming methods, and the college supplies some of these. There are other branches of the Civil Service for which non-Europeans are prepared and also branches of commercial life. Would-be parsons can also start their training here.'

'Can a student get a Master's degree here?' asked Mr Wisley.

'Oh yes', replied the teacher. 'But generally by the time he has taken a Bachelor's degree an African's slender resources are exhausted. Also, many go on from Fort Hare to Cape Town University or the Witwatersrand if they wish to take Master's or other advanced degrees. Only a few go overseas to English or American Universities for medical and other degrees. There's Professor Zacharias Matthews, head of the college's Law and Administration Department, who took his M.A. at Yale, U.S.A. And another old student I can recall off-hand who went overseas is Dr Rosebery Bokwe, who took his medical degrees at Edinburgh.'

Finding Mr Wisley greatly interested in the matter of education for the Bantu, Claude Letempe took Dick and his father across to Lovedale, the best known and biggest of the missionary education and training institutions in South Africa. Their guide explained to the Wisleys that the Wesleyan, Methodist, Anglican and Roman Catholic missionaries were responsible for a very great part of Bantu education. The Government gave them financial assistance and was now beginning to enter the field with its own schools for natives. In the beginning there had been a lot of bad blood between the Colonists and the missionaries because the former accused the latter of being blindly in favour of the Bantu, and misrepresenting the actions of the White people against the Black in reports to papers overseas. But now those troubles had ended and the people of the Union recognized the missionaries as a great civilizing influence among the Bantu.

'When I talk about civilizing the Bantu', Claude Letempe went

on, 'please do not regard me as saying that the Bantu had no civilization of his own and was just a wild black savage. Nothing could be more untrue. Our old tribal system was in many ways a good form of government for the time and circumstances. There were hereditary chiefs but they were controlled by a group of councillors. If the chief got very nasty his people would leave him in a body and go over to another chief, and the deserted chief would discover he was a very unimportant fellow indeed with no followers. There were a large number of laws, many of which were quite as advanced as most European laws—some, in fact, were more sensible. One or two customs seem to indicate that we had ages before been in contact with civilizations of the Middle East. Up and down Africa signs are to be found of an older Bantu culture, like the Zimbabwe Ruins and various irrigation works. Old legends tell of such advanced states too. Bantu pottery and music are not to be put aside lightly either.

'But our great weakness was that we had no means of writing, no way to pass on to the next generation great discoveries in thought, in the way that the Europeans and the Chinese had', Claude Letempe continued. 'Our progress could go so far and no further. Today, this great gift of reading and writing has been brought to the Bantu from Europe. Everywhere in Africa the Black people are struggling to become literate. Government and missionary institutions are offering opportunities to learn.'

One of the first places to which Claude Letempe took the Wisleys was the Lovedale Press workshops. This Press, he told them, came into being in 1823 when Missionary Bennie, in the heart of Kaffraria, produced the first printed sheet in the Xhosa language. Since that time Lovedale Press had produced books, magazines and newspapers in Bantu languages, and at least one magazine in English—*The South African Outlook*—which, because of its treatment of native problems, has a wide circulation outside the Union. Students are now given a thorough training in printing and bookbinding in the workshops of the press.

Mr Wisley and Dick learnt that in addition to normal primary and secondary education, Lovedale provided classes in printing, in building, carpentry and wagon-making. At other missionary institutions, leather-work, metal-work, tailoring and shoemaking

were taught. Native girl students learnt domestic arts—basket work, spinning, weaving and nursing, the nurses being trained at the Victoria Hospital.

Presently, the Wisleys and their guide passed a group of young Bantu men neatly if shabbily dressed in coats and flannels.

'Lovedale students on a holiday task', observed Claude Letempe.

'Surely you mean Fort Hare students?' asked Mr Wisley.

'No, no', said Claude Letempe, 'I'm fairly certain they're Lovedale students.'

'But they wouldn't be at secondary school still. Surely there aren't young men between about twenty and thirty years of age in that group?' persisted Mr Wisley.

Claude Letempe laughed. 'I assure you, sir', he said, 'that in some of my primary school classes I have scholars of twenty-one and sometimes over. You see, the Bantu doesn't start school at a certain age, he starts school when he can afford to go. Sometimes the older children have to help on the farms and plots until the younger ones are big enough to take over their jobs and allow them to go to school. At other times the older ones help to see the younger ones through school by working elsewhere for money. It's no uncommon thing to find in one institution a younger brother working for his standard six with his grown-up elder brother following behind in standard one—having returned to school after his family had been able to make independent provision for the younger. Thus you will find that many students both in Lovedale and Fort Hare are far beyond the average age for scholars and students at the same stage in England.'

While Claude Letempe was talking they toured dining-halls, dormitories, instruction-blocks and hostels. They stopped to admire an original little open-air 'church', a wooden pulpit in front of benches shaded by oak trees. The primary school, in which student teachers also practised, was a most attractive modern building. The Wisleys learned that the Transvaal Chamber of Mines had contributed a large sum towards its construction, but that for further development which the Institution at Lovedale still had in mind, thousands of pounds are still needed.

'Not thousands of pounds but millions are needed to satisfy the

need for education of Black people in the Union', Claude Letempe said while they were walking back to Fort Hare. 'A new way of life has come to my people, a Western way of life, and for that we need education more than anything else. The old days of tribal living belong to the past just in the same way as your ancestors who painted themselves blue belong to the past. The Bantu are streaming to the towns, working in European houses, factories and mines. Even in the Reserve, which you will be going through when you leave here, we must learn new methods of looking after cattle and dealing with the land. And if we are to be of the greatest service to ourselves and to South Africa, we must be able to be educated better and quicker. That's the first step of many. Today three million Europeans have University facilities for over 20,000 students a year, while nine million Africans hardly have the means or facilities to give 1,000 students higher education. That situation must end. Every European child in the country can get education right up to matriculation stage, but there are enough schools to teach the beginning of the three R's to just half the African children. That too, must be changed.'

They walked along for a while in the little silence that seemed to Dick always to fall at the close of any conversation about the African people's needs in the Union.

Then Claude Letempe turned his earnest black face towards Mr Wisley and there was the sudden white flash of his smile. 'It still is a struggle', he said. 'But these forts are no longer the outposts of civilization advancing among the Black people. They are the outposts of the Black people advancing into civilization.'



## Chapter 21

# THROUGH THE RESERVES AND A VISIT TO A SMALL NATION

From King William's Town the travellers moved further into what was left of the old world of the Bantu. The country was mainly grassland, hilly and attractive, with occasional distant glimpses of the great Drakensberg Range. Very occasionally there were European villages, the seats of magistracies, and everywhere could be seen small and large clusters of round thatched huts and thorn-scrub *kraals* for the cattle. Groups of huts lay alongside the road and others could be seen perched on the slopes of distant hills. Numbers of the huts had painted borders round their windows, making the openings look for all the world like the painted eyes of a clown. Sometimes there were little orchards and gardens but more often the dwellings looked bare, and the hardened ground between the huts had no vegetation. Rains had recently fallen and in addition to the numerous cattle seen in the fields, teams of oxen or tractors were pulling ploughs along bare acres of brown earth. But in some places the soil looked to Dick as if it were mixed grey and black. It had a rather drawn appearance as though it were exhausted.

Here and there groups of cheering Black children, mostly in tattered clothing, waved as they passed. Women with blankets tightly wound round them and carrying tins or bundles on their heads, and others in very voluminous Victorian skirts, walked by in single file along the roadside. Occasionally they saw a man wearing either a blanket or conventional modern clothes and he saluted the motorists courteously.

'Thing you'll always notice in the country, and in the Reserves especially, is the politeness and good manners of the natives', Mr Johnson remarked, returning the salute of a passer-by. 'After they have been pushed around in the cities for a while they lose their manners like a lot of other people. But out here in their natural state they're as courteous as diplomats.'

Presently the Wisleys noticed that a certain amount of fencing and water-boring was going on. The traveller explained that this was part of the Government's rehabilitation plan to put Bantu farming in the Reserves on a sound footing. But much more than this had to be done if the idea of having separate states for the African people of the Union was to be carried out, said Mr Johnson. Whole new towns, industrial areas, and big businesses, run only by Africans, would have to be created, and new afforestation schemes, big dams, hydro-electric schemes.

'Is it being started?' asked Mr Wisley.

'There are small beginnings', said Mr Johnson. 'But it's going to mean spending hundreds of millions.'

'They seem to have lots of cattle, sheep and goats', Dick said.

'Well, you know a Bantu still counts his wealth by the number of cattle he has', Mr Johnson remarked. 'He pays the *lobola* for his wife in cattle—*lobola* is the compensation paid to his father-in-law for depriving the old gentleman of his daughter's services.'

'They can have more than one wife at a time, can't they?'

'Yes, they can. But a wife is, relatively, just as expensive to keep in the Reserves as she is anywhere else in the world. Only very wealthy natives manage to support more than one. And of course, many of the natives are Christians—every school in the Reserves is a Mission school aided by the Government.'

They stayed over at the capital of the Transkei, Umtata, a little European town on a bare hillside. Here they inspected a fair-sized stone building, the *Bunga*, where the new Bantu Authorities met to discuss the affairs of the area.

'Is it a Bantu Parliament with elections and parties?' asked Dick.

'Hardly', said Mr Johnson. 'The members are chiefs and White officials. The Union's really big African party is the African National Congress, but it's represented nowhere.'

Dick's main adventure in the Reserves took place while he was staying for the afternoon and night at a trading station. These trading stations were owned by Europeans and were the chief sources of supply for the Bantu of everything from canned foods, mealie-meal and blankets, to beads, banjos and mouth-organs. The owner had taken Dick's father and the traveller off to show them a sight some distance away, but Dick had elected to remain

and potter around the station with Reggie, the trader's son, who was home from school for the vacation. The boys watched customers come in to make their purchases, buying things very deliberately and taking a lot of time, while the Bantu and White attendants made up parcels and got down the commodities.

'I wish I could see how they lived inside their huts', Dick said to Reggie, who was the same age as himself.

'All right', said Reggie. 'I can take you. My Dad and yours won't be home till late to-night, so we could go and have supper with old Dina Gobane. She worked for Mother for a long time as a girl, before she got married to David Gobane. She's always visited us since, even after Mother died. She can speak English quite well, too, and she taught me most of my Xhosa. When I was a kid I used to play with Charlie Gobane, her eldest son.'

So Reggie went into the store again and came out with two tins of canned meat as a present for Dina Gobane and then the two boys set out for her *kraal*, which was perched up on a hillside some distance away. Reggie told Dick that Dina's husband worked on the Rand gold mines and returned to the Reserves only for short intervals. Money arrived from him regularly but Dina hoped that he would one day be able to return for good, though it was hard to make ends meet for a large family depending only on a small plot in the Reserves. She had five children, three daughters and two sons, and in addition she had a widowed sister-in-law staying with her who also had a number of children.

They met Charlie Gobane and his younger brother, Sipo, bringing in the cattle. Charlie was about the age of the two European boys and Sipo was about ten. Both had bright, merry faces, very white grins and cracked, dusty feet. They were extremely pleased to see Reggie and greeted Dick shyly. Charlie had a little English but for the most part spoke in Xhosa with Reggie translating when anything of interest to Dick was said.

'Did you get to school this year, Charlie?' asked Reggie, as they drove the cattle towards the thornbush enclosure.

'No. But perhaps after next year I will,' Charlie replied. 'Sipo and little Ellen go now, but Gerani and I must help our mother. Perhaps our father will come back for good next year after.'

Dina Gobane gave Reggie a great welcome and clasped her

hands together in gratitude at the present of canned meat. When she learnt that Dick and Reggie were staying to supper she started a tremendous bustle, hurrying up with the milking and stirring Gerani, her eldest daughter, to make the fire. Dick and Reggie first went on a tour of the four huts which made up Gobane's *kraal*, together with the cattle enclosure. Each hut contained a single room with a thatched roof and a dung-smeared earth floor. Blankets and cured skins lay on the floor and one or two implements hung on the walls. Every hut also smelt strongly of smoke, for fires were made inside them in unpleasant weather, and added to this was the strong sweaty smell of the Bantu. This smell was at first a little overpowering for Europeans but they soon got used to it. Reggie remarked to Dick that Europeans smelt just as odd to the Bantu.

To-night the fire was made outside and Dina Gobane and her sister-in-law were already stirring the mealie-meal porridge in the black pot with three legs when Dick and Reggie had finished their tour of inspection. The little children of both families were playing hide-and-seek while their elders brought milk in, put the plough away and saw to it that the cattle were safe for the night. As the sun's red stain faded in the sky across the hills and the shadows filled the little valleys, smoke began to go up from all the scattered clusters of huts round about. Long after daylight had completely gone the fires outside the homes continued and Dick was able to make out figures silhouetted round them. The children's game changed to a mock-wedding, and clapping their hands rhythmically the little Black boys and girls began to sing. Their voices were very beautiful and they harmonized effortlessly without a faltering note. The whole performance was so spontaneous that Dick was hardly aware of the beauty of the singing until it was all over, but afterwards there was never a calm, still evening that Dick didn't remember those scattered orange-points of fire and the children's clear singing flowing out to the dark hills. Far away there was other singing. The sky was very clear and it was spattered with stars.

They had their meal sitting round the fire. Dina Gobane brought out her four tin plates for the occasion and filled them with thick mealie-meal, warmed canned meat and wild spinach.

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A little group shared each plate. Dick and Reggie had one between them and ate with their fingers. The meal was obviously something of a feast and Reggie told Dick later that at ordinary times the Gobanes would have had mealie-meal, spinach and either some milk or sour-milk, the form in which many Bantu preferred to have their milk.

Dina told Reggie during the meal that she hoped that David, her husband, would return at the end of the next year for good.

'Sometimes I get frightened he will come back with that terrible blood-coughing disease that men used to get on the mines', she said.

Dick felt he could reassure her on this point, after what he had heard at Uncle Willie's mine.

'Then that is good', said Dina. 'But it will be better for all of us if he can stay at home. For the farm work must now be done by children and watched over by women who have much to do in the huts. Perhaps, too, we can send Charlie and Gerani to school.'

After the meal Dina told the group of children one of the innumerable fables with which Bantu folk-lore abounds. Everybody listened with rapt attention and Dina practically turned the story into a little play, taking every part herself and changing her voice and expression to suit the character. Reggie translated for Dick in a rapid undertone.

The story was about how a lion and a man entered into a contract to share everything that was caught in a certain trap. One day the man's wife fell into the trap. The man was in a terrible situation when the lion demanded half of the woman according to their agreement. He argued despairingly. Then the hare, nearly always the cleverest animal in Bantu stories, came along and the parties appealed to him. The hare asked the lion to show exactly how he had found the wife. The King of Beasts climbed into the trap to do this. When the lion was safely in the trap everybody ran away and left him.

'It's a bit like Brer Rabbit', said Dick at the end.

'Oh yes. The hare is the ancestor of Brer Rabbit. Uncle Remus was a black slave, remember, and he must have brought these stories across from Africa with him', Reggie answered.

At last, when the talking and the stories were over, everybody went off to bed. Reggie declared that no one would miss them

till late the following morning so he and Dick decided to sleep in the hut with the two young Gobane boys. Dina brought them sacks filled with straw and two new blankets she had just bought, but her two sons slept soundly on reed mats on the floor.

'There may be an odd flea or two', whispered Reggie to Dick. 'D'you mind?' Dick thought the experience of sleeping in a real native hut would be worth it.

Very early the next morning he woke up to find Charlie putting on his trousers—he had slept in his tattered shirt—and preparing to go out. He and Reggie got up and went along with him. In the half-light the two White boys helped Charlie and an older boy from the other family to inspan a team of oxen for early ploughing. Then they drove the cattle out to the fields. Dina came for a short while to superintend the work and brought some welcome coffee for the boys to drink. When they returned to the house the sun was well up and the children were breakfasting on thick mealie-meal and milk. Dick learnt that the Bantu ate only two meals a day, one in the morning and one in the evening, so that he could hardly blame the Gobane children for eating a great deal of the, to him, rather unpalatable mealie-meal. After breakfast the younger children and Gerani went off on a three-mile journey, the former to school and the latter to fetch water.

Dick and Reggie, after taking leave of Dina and Charlie, walked back to the trading station in the early morning sunshine. Dick, not used to sleeping in his clothes, felt he must get back and change as soon as possible. Reggie, who wasn't so squeamish about it, laughed at him, saying it was only a matter of getting used to it. In summer, he added, most natives slept naked.

'They seem happy enough', Dick said.

'Y-yes', said Reggie, as if a little doubtfully. 'The natives have got very happy dispositions, you know. But life is pretty hard for them, if you come to think of it. Old Dina's got a terrible lot to do and her husband's got to go away because he can't earn enough from his plot. And then they don't eat much beyond mealie-meal, wild spinach and milk, with, say, meat about twice a month. That's why I took those tins of canned meat along. It's a great treat.'

'Have they got any amusements for the older people?'

'Weddings and initiation ceremonies—when they circumcise the

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boys', replied Reggie. 'Otherwise life is about as monotonous as their food. That's why such a lot of young men run away to the towns—partly for money and partly for a more exciting time.'

As the two boys climbed up the wandering track back to the station they could hear the far, clear singing of a Xhosa girl as she went to fetch water.

It was a trader friend of Reggie's father, a certain Joe Fellowes, who gave the Wisleys their most unexpected trip.

'Call me Joe,' he said. 'Like to go to Basutoland?'

'I'm sure we'd love to', said Mr Wisley, 'but I haven't the time.'

'It'll only take you a day extra. I'm flying my plane over there tomorrow', said Joe.

So, as the next day broke, the Wisleys found themselves in a small three-seater plane soaring towards the distant Drakensberg Mountains. Soon the earth beneath them looked like a petrified storm at sea. The whole earth tossed with ranges, peaks, tablelands; clouds broke like foam from the higher ridges, waterfalls fell from the steeper sides, and streams ran faintly in deep valleys. Here and there the tiny shapes of mud-hut villages clung to declivitous sites.

'That will show you why the Basutos were never finally conquered by Zulus, Boers, or British', said Joe, pointing down.

'Did they always fall back into these mountains?'

'That's right! Those mountains made them the most independent Black nation in Southern Africa, even today.'

Dick asked how it happened to be a British Protectorate then? Their pilot laughed. 'They fought the Free State Boers to a standstill. They even killed the Boer Commander, Lou Wepener, just as he got to the top of the most famous Basuto hide-out, Thaba Bosigo. Then their chief, a real genius called Moshesh, found the pace getting too hot and handed his country over to the British for safe keeping. It's been a headache for the British ever since.'

They came down beside the capital of Basutoland, Maseru. It was a dusty little town, dotted with stone houses. It had a miniature Government, a miniature High Court, a miniature Cathedral and a miniature Parliament. Walking everywhere in the town were slow-moving, small, supple people cloaked in the most vivid

blankets imaginable, all with striking shapes and forms upon them, stars, circles, squares, zig-zags, and in every colour of the rainbow. To top off their dazzling garments many passers-by wore traditional straw-hats shaped like lamp-shades. Blankets too, were the main commodity sold by the big trading stores of the towns. There were blankets to suit all ages, from tiny tots to grey-beards. At the counters Basuto men and women carefully inspected the patterns and felt the quality, while the Basuto attendants waited patiently for them to make up their minds.

'They're called the Blanket People. Each Basuto buys a blanket a year, and he insists on good quality', Joe told the Wisleys.

These blankets had many uses. They were even more suitable for carrying fat Black babies on the back than the smaller, colourless blankets that Bantu mothers used elsewhere. And if a Basuto felt tired, he simply lay down by the road-side, pulled his blanket over his head, and was soon dead to the world.

Dick did not see any men in blankets when he looked in on a session of the Basutoland National Council which was then sitting in the small octagonal stone parliament. There equal numbers of grave chiefs and elected commoners, all neatly suited, sat side by side in circular tiers considering a new constitution. They spoke in Sesuto, their language, but each word was translated into English by a translator. In high oaken seats at one end of the chamber sat the stout and motherly Chieftainess of all the Basutos, and beside her was the British Resident Commissioner.

Later Dick and his father met the editor of the small local paper in his office—a mud-walled, mud-floored room next to a fruit-stall. The editor was a charming Basuto, who spoke faultless English and told them eagerly about his paper and Basutoland.

Soon Joe had them in a car and took them out to see the little Catholic University at Roma with its pleasing grey stone buildings and its staff drawn from many races, including a number of South Africans and Canadians. The students were all Basutos. The university was beautifully equipped and looked bound to become one of the most important educational institutions in Africa.

On their way back to Maseru, Joe took them to see the long, low table-topped Thaba Bosigo, the Mountain of the Night. It was to this mountain that the wily Basuto chief, Moshesh, would



withdraw with his armies and cattle, and live on the great grasslands at the top. The last slopes of the mountain became sheer walls of rock, and there was only one path to the summit. The defenders would roll stones down on anybody who approached. The scene that lay around the base of the mountain as the Wisleys looked down was one of complete peace. Half a dozen little villages with their fields filled the level lands at its foot. The sound of women's and children's voices chattering and calling came up to them from everywhere.

During the drive back Dick looked curiously at the many small villages through which they passed. Most of the dwellings were round thatched huts, some with designs painted in clay or picked out in little stones on the walls. Others, belonging to headmen and chiefs, were neat square buildings of grey mud, showing a European influence.

Occasionally they would pass a lonely mission church or a crowded trading post. The earth around the roads had a dry, cracked look about it, and jagged soil-erosion gulleys zig-zagged across the open plains. Often as they went through the streams on the gully bottoms, women washing clothes there would call a greeting to them or children would cry out cheerfully, 'Sweets! Sweets!'

'I don't notice an awful lot of men out in the country? Do so many work in Maseru?' asked Mr Wisley.

'Further away than that!' said Joe. 'Johannesburg, Bloemfontein, the farms of the Cape. Basutoland is too poor and rocky to support half a million Basutos. So they're dependent for a living on the Union, which they're so determined to remain independent of.' Joe added, 'Dr Verwoerd keeps telling the British they should hand Basutoland over so that it can share the future economic blessings of *apartheid*.'

Only very occasionally did a man pass them on the road. Sometimes he was riding one of the tough and shaggy little horses that were so useful in the mountains. The riders sat with their conical straw-hats tilted slightly forward, wrapped in their blankets and their reflections.

'They always look very thoughtful,' said Mr Wisley.

'They've got a lot to think about,' said Joe.

## *Chapter 22*

### NATAL—THE BEAUTIFUL PROVINCE

They crossed over from the last of the Reserves, Pondoland, to Natal through a majestic gorge, with monkeys screaming and chattering in its wooded sides. It was a fitting introduction to what Mr Johnson informed the Wisleys was the most beautiful Province in South Africa. The scenery was lush and tropical; bush and trees tangled here and there by creepers grew thickly along their route. There was a greenness about everything that contrasted strongly with the winter tint of the rest of South Africa. Rivers, too, seemed anxious to make up for what parts of the Union lacked of their kind and flowed between bushy banks at frequent intervals across their path.

They drove down towards the coast and soon found themselves in a part where seaside resorts shouldered one another along the warm Indian ocean. These were attractive places with hotels, boarding houses, holiday shacks and cottages. Some had very English names, and others Zulu names—Margate, Port Shepstone, Scottburgh and Umkomaas, Ivongo, Isipingo. Recent attacks on bathers by sharks had scared away many off-season holiday-makers temporarily. 'Not as many patrons as our tramp friend expected', said Mr Wisley.

At a place called Illovo they looked over a big sugar factory and then, swinging inland, found themselves travelling over roads like lanes between sugar-cane plantations, which spread over the whole countryside. Coolies, whose ancestors had been brought over from India to work on these plantations, could be seen at their labours. The traveller said that Natal produced practically all of the Union's annual sugar crop of twenty-five-and-a-half million tons.

Eight days after the party had set out from Port Elizabeth the Wisleys arrived at the large, industrious and picturesque seaport of Durban, second only in importance to Cape Town, and the third city of the Union. Its magnificent harbour was almost a lagoon. Palm trees and flamboyants grew along its outer streets

and tropical gardens could be seen about the houses on the hills which formed the background to the business centre. Dick could never quite get the hang of this business centre, both ends of which seemed to him hopeless entanglements of streets. The lower end curved and twisted towards the crowded harbour and graving dock, the industrial area, and the beaches, while the upper part spread out to the residential quarters.

Each town in South Africa had its own atmosphere but Durban seemed unlike any of the others. It was more vivid and cleaner than Cape Town, but it lacked the calm beauty of the older port; it was bright and busy but had not the urgency and ultra-modernity of Jo'burg. There were numerous interesting shops, among which were a high percentage of art and curio establishments. Dick thought that he knew what made Durban seem different from all the other places he had seen—it was the tropical scenery, the rickshaw boys, and the Indians. Rickshaws were light two-seater, two-wheeled carts, often drawn by a magnificently-built Zulu, semi-naked and plumed with feathers, or with a head-dress of horns. Indians were to be seen everywhere, as waiters in hotels, owners of small shops and in the Indian quarter, where there were many Indian women in their graceful, flowing saris. There were more Indians than Europeans in Durban.

Paul Blackson, whom Dick was delighted to find on holiday in Durban, always seemed half angry with the smiling Indian waiters. 'These Indians!' he would say if one took too long to bring him a cool drink. 'Always passive-resisting about something.'

'Passive resistance', said Mr Wisley, when Dick asked him about it, 'means disobeying a law you object to without being violent. Ghandi actually began to develop passive resistance when he was a young advocate in South Africa, to protest against this country's laws against Indians.'

True to his early promise Paul taught Dick how to surf, to ride the long, slow-breaking waves towards the shore until they burst into foam on the beach. It gave Dick a wonderful sensation of speed. As the water was nearly tepid, the boys could surf for hours.

Most of the time Dick and Paul spent together on the beaches of Durban. Either they sat sunbathing on the sand between the crowds of deck-chairs or swam and surfed among the bathers

bobbing up and down in the breakers. Dick's father nearly always turned up to take them to lunch at one of the big hotels that lined the waterfront. It became one of Dick's major pleasures to sit with his skin feeling tight and shrunken by sunshine and seawater and drink oros or lemos or ginger beer beside the ever talkative Paul in a crowded, noisy hotel lounge.

But Dick never heard anybody talking Afrikaans. He remarked upon this to a business friend of Mr Wisley who was lunching with them.

'Oh, we're bilingual here, but we speak English and Zulu', said the business man. 'A great part of Natal is Zululand and the rest is very English—in the same way that the Orange Free State is predominantly Afrikaans. Afrikaners in Durban often feel the atmosphere so English that when they leave they talk about "going back to the Union".'

Dick had a very good time in Durban and was so busy going the round of the city's entertainments, its big cinemas, parks and beaches, that he scarcely managed more than a fleeting glance at the big industries and harbour works which made Durban one of the most important towns on the east coast of Africa. Long before a small group of settlers from the Eastern Cape had colonized this Natal port, the east coast of Africa had seen many traders come and go from Egypt, Arabia and India. Now that the countries fringing the Indian Ocean were beginning to develop faster, the trade across it and along its coastline would increase rapidly, and Durban had a great future.

But Dick fully appreciated this East African character of Durban only when they were leaving the port for Pietermaritzburg. Before they were finally clear of the city they had to pass through some miles of pleasant, spacious country suburbs filled with tropical trees and big homes. These were the homes to which the more moneyed citizens of Durban fled when the heat of Durban became overpowering. The houses covered the high hills in the city's immediate hinterland and were therefore cooler.

The scenery after they had driven clear of these homes became very impressive. Dick could understand how it had inspired some of the work of the poet, Roy Campbell. The road lay over big humps of hills and they could see for miles across the pleasant

countryside. They stopped and had tea at a hotel which overlooked a place whose name describes its grandeur, 'The Valley of a Thousand Hills'. It was a vista of a multitude of hills and ravines stretching away northwards.

'We're looking across to Zululand', said Mr Graham, the friend of Mr Wisley, who came with them. 'I suppose you know that the Zulus used to be the most powerful tribe in Southern Africa. They were very well organized as fighters, and wiped out large numbers of natives. It is reckoned that in the inter-tribal wars from about 1817 till about 1830 nearly two million Bantu were killed. It was these wars as much as anything else which smashed the old native way of living.'

'Who beat the Zulus, then? The British?' asked Dick.

'The Boers, first of all—at the Battle of Blood River', replied their host for the journey. 'As a matter of fact the town of Pietermaritzburg was founded in connection with it. . . .'

'Yes, I meant to ask', Dick said. 'Who was Pieter Maritz?'

'He was actually two people—Pieter Retief and Gert Maritz, two Voortrekker leaders who came with a party to treat with the Zulu king for a tract of land and were treacherously murdered by him. After that the Zulus massacred as many Boer women and children as they could find. Hence the Battle of Blood River in 1838, when a handful of Boers behind a wagon-laager defeated the Zulu army. The Zulus were defeated again several times by the British. When you look around at the miners, kitchen servants and rickshaw-boys of to day it's hard to think of their fathers as the most savage and well-disciplined warriors in Africa.

'Incidentally', added Mr Graham, 'one of the big public holidays in the Union is Covenant Day—the day of the Battle of Blood River'.

Pietermaritzburg reminded Dick strongly of Grahamstown, although it was larger and even prettier than the Eastern Province city. Like Grahamstown, Pietermaritzburg is the capital of its area and a big educational centre. Much of the atmosphere of old colonial days when the town was a military headquarters remained clinging to the old buildings and they clung to existence among the more modern ones. The military feeling about the town came from both past and recent history. The alarms caused by the

Zulu uprisings, the memory of when the Boers could have ridden down on the city on their way to capture the port of Durban from the British, the marks left by the passage of so many Imperial and South African troops camped there in transit for North African campaigns, all left something in the atmosphere about the town like dust hanging in the afternoon sunshine. Pretty homes and pine-plantations looked down on the city from the hillsides, and from the tops of these heights one could see blue mountains in the distance.

The greenness and grandeur of Natal continued to follow them for quite a long way even after the Wisleys had left its capital on the last stage on their 2,500-mile journey round the Union. But they were fairly soon out of it and back in the Transvaal, for Natal was by far the smallest province in the Union, less than half the size of Great Britain.

## Chapter 23

# WILDEST AFRICA

A few days before he was due to return to England, Dick sat in the Blacksons' drawing-room writing a long letter home.

DEAR MUMS, NOT TO MENTION MARGARET (he wrote),

After I'd been in the Union for a few days I didn't think I would so much as see a lion, let alone have a real, hundred per cent lion story to tell. But here I am, in civilization once more, sitting down quite calmly to tell you about my adventures among the Kings of Beasts. And when I say *among* the Kings of Beasts, I mean it, for there was no more than a pane of glass between me and a round dozen of them sometimes. You've no idea how thin a motor car window seemed!

We got back from the Kruger National Park last night, after Dad, Mr Blackson, Cecil and I had spent nearly a week there. When I say 'Park', don't think of a place like Regent's or Hyde Park, full of lawns and trees and walks. The K.N.P. is a little bigger than Wales, it's up in the north-east corner of the Transvaal and it's such a bit of unspoilt Africa that it used to be known as a 'white man's grave' up to a few years ago. That was because of the malaria that one gets there, and even nowadays part of the Park is closed for the summer when the mosquitoes that give you the fever are active. There are a lot of trees, of course—big baobabs and fever-trees and mopanis—but there's also a great deal of flat-topped mimosa bush. The whole country is kept more or less as it looked long ago and there are lovely rivers running through it. And last, but not least, nobody has been allowed to shoot the wild animals there for years and years and the whole place absolutely teems with every African animal you can think of. It's like a huge zoo but with no cages or bars or walls and all the animals are perfectly free to roam about as they like.

Of course, there is one big change in the Park since it used to be a 'white man's grave' and that is the villages and roads they have built in it for visitors. There is a whole string of camps of

thatched bungalows with restaurants where people spend the night. They are very pretty and have names like Skukusa, Satara, Letaba, Punda Maria and so on. There are about twelve hundred miles of roads going in different directions through the Park and linking up the rest camps. All along these roads are notices telling you to 'stay in your car'.

But I'd better begin at the beginning . . .

We drove from Johannesburg eastwards to Barberton, an old mining town lying in a big bowl of mountains, and then we turned up north. Mr Blackson did this to show us a bit of the country in the South African spring. It was a lovely journey. The veld had a fresh green look and there were peach trees absolutely covered in blossom and red-flowering kaffir-trees and many other flowering plants. When we got to the Park the mimosas were in blossom. They look much more furry when they're growing, of course, and they give off a drowsy sort of scent.

We arrived pretty late so that we couldn't go out and see anything before they shut the rest camp gates for the night. You aren't allowed in the Park at night because, for one thing, it's a bit dangerous. After a good supper we went off to the bungalow rooms that had been given us. Cecil and I shared one. There were a lot of people and cars in camp, and most of us soon went to bed, for it's best to make an early start if you want to see wild animals.

I was pretty excited and I lay awake for a while thinking of all the life that was going on just a few hundred yards away—just as it had gone on in Africa millions of years before man came. You could almost feel the living going on in the moonlight and in the shadows of the bushes—like electricity in the air. There were lots of little sounds in the stillness, too. And then, just as I was about to drop off, I heard a snorting sound quite close to the camp. This was followed by a quick stirring and a thudding noise as if horses were galloping away. And suddenly there was a most tremendous roaring that filled the whole night and nearly made me fall out of bed. It died away in a lot of coughing and grunting as if the lion had hurt his throat with roaring so much.

Cecil and I were up before the dawn and it was one of the loveliest sunrises I've ever seen. The first bird we heard was the



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ground hornbill who woke all the other birds with a deep, booming 'hoo-hoo'. Soon the bird sounds were going on like a tremendous conference and in the distance we could hear francolins and partridges calling.

When we started out I was just a bit scared at the thought of meeting lions along the road. Cecil cheered me up by saying that some people never so much as saw the tail of a lion as they passed through. Well, we didn't see a lion that day but we saw so many other animals that I quite forgot about their 'King'. Hardly a minute passed the whole day when we didn't see herds of impala, blue wildebeest, zebra and other beautiful antelopes. Kudu—they've got the most magnificent horns—and waterbuck bulls stood on guard over their smaller, more timid, and dainty-looking ewes. Baboons barked from hillsides and scolded their young. And the lovely South African chamois, the klipspringer, posed for us on the tops of rock 'koppies'.

I suppose I'd seen a lot of these animals before in zoos, but watching them at liberty like that made me realize how little we see of the real character of the animals when they're in captivity. Here in the Park they were not moping behind bars, but proud and dignified and terribly quick and alive. Somehow they are not just curiosities to stare at, but very lovely, fascinating things you feel a sort of respect for. It sounds odd, but I felt rather like a foreigner in a land of free, wonderful people.

We saw a number of birds, too. Bustards and korhaans walked about as if they owned the place, and guinea-fowl would hardly get out of our way. There was a very solemn looking secretary-bird dancing on a poor old snake and we stopped to watch it eat its kill. It was only afterwards we realized that we weren't the only spectators, for nearby, looking down from the branch of a tree, was a big leopard.

I saw my first lion very early the next morning. It was a lioness, actually, sitting on the roadside blinking in the sunlight. I had an odd feeling for a bit, as if I were having a dream about looking at a yellow cat through a magnifying glass. Mr Blackson stopped the car and we all sat there dead still, almost holding our breath, looking at the lioness, until she got up very lazily and strolled further away from the road. Then we realized that there was a

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whole troop of lions lying about digesting the previous night's meal in the little clearing before us. They didn't seem a bit disturbed by us and other cars which had stopped near us. One was rolling on its back in the dust. A big, maned fellow was yawning his head off and giving everybody who cared for the sight a view of his fine teeth. A younger one was sitting, his tail straight out behind him, staring dreamily into the distance. Some of the others lay quite still on their sides in the sun, but you could tell by the little glitter under their eyelids that they were watching us.

Mr Blackson was telling us how he had read in a book by Major Stevenson-Hamilton, the Warden of the Park, that lions are just as afraid of man as most animals are, when a car stopped beside us and a man popped his head out of a sliding sun-roof in the hood and made a noise at the lions. He evidently thought it was tremendously funny and so did the people in his car for I could see them shrieking with laughter. The lions nearest us got up and wandered a little further away. Mr Blackson drove off saying that it was better not to be too near the 'funny man' as we came to call him.

We saw plenty of lions during the day, including a mother with a litter of cubs like tremendous kittens. A young lioness had a sort of game with us at one place and chased after the car for a little way. We also began to see a lot of giraffe, busy chewing the tops off mimosa bushes. At one place a noise startled some of them and they ran off, moving for all the world as if they were on a slow motion film. At another place there were brown woolly buffaloes, big dangerous-looking creatures, and one was scratching its head on an overhanging branch just as I've seen cows do at home. Of course we saw many more of the animals we'd seen the day before and also some splendid roan and sable antelopes.

But the greatest thrill hadn't come yet. It happened after we had early afternoon tea at Letaba and were driving down a road not far from the camp. Suddenly Mr Blackson slowed the car down to a walking pace and pointed to the side of the road. We saw some jackals, fox-like animals, slinking in the shadow of a bush. A couple of hyenas, looking exactly like thugs, also sidled into the bushes. And a little way off were four vultures waiting

silently on a big stone, their horrible fleshy necks looking as if they were sunburnt.

'They must be waiting for a kill', Mr Blackson said softly. 'You'll always find them where lions are stalking.'

The car crept forward, with us watching the long shadows the setting sun threw on either side of the road. We moved slowly to a little clearing, and were just in time to see a great yellow form shoot through the air and crash down on the back of an impala bull. There was a startled drumming of hooves and antelopes disappeared in all directions. In a few moments only the lion was left, standing with a twitching tail over the quivering body of the buck. For a moment he stood still watching and then he lifted his big prey exactly as a cat does a rat and set it down a little further on. Soon a lioness came out and then a number of other lions and began rending the victim to pieces and eating it.

I was awfully excited at first, but it was rather horrifying afterwards to see the poor old impala being torn to shreds with the vultures, hyenas and jackals steadily closing in to take the left-overs. But Mr Blackson said, 'You must realize it's not the lions' fault they are meat-eaters. Nature made them like that. And anyway, they only kill to eat, not wantonly, like so many of our so-called sportsmen'.

The next morning, quite early, we saw a troop of lions stalking some wildebeest. It was really rather like cats stalking birds on the lawn. Except that cats never hunt together as lions do, for lions are very clever. Next to the baboons and the elephants, they are the most intelligent animals. Anyway, this stalking was just getting very exciting because a big wildebeest had got suspicious and was sniffing the air, when who should come along but the funny man. Back went his sun-roof, out he popped and shouted suddenly, 'Look out, you dope!' Wildebeest scattered in all directions and the people in the funny man's car nearly died of laughter. The lions went bounding on a bit but it was too late.

'The funny man may have saved a wildebeest's life, but I shouldn't be surprised if he loses his own one of these days', Mr Blackson said and I felt that I didn't care if he did. It made me a bit disappointed with all the animals and Africa itself that such a silly person could make fools of them.

## WILDEST AFRICA

Well, we got away from the funny man as quickly as the low speed limit of the Park would let us—twenty-five miles an hour. We didn't see any more lions that day but again we saw hundreds of other animals. There were quite a few ostriches, and we saw bush-pigs and wart-hogs for the first time. The wart-hogs are very comic animals, with solemn carbuncled faces and the habit of holding their tails erect like wireless rods with little tassels hanging from them when they run away. And we saw hippopotami, solemnly sinking and refloating themselves in a big pool in the river. They went under and came up with a beautiful bubbling sound sometimes.

A native policeman, one of the Bantu assistants of the White rangers of the Park, told us that hippos were known as 'nbubu' to the natives. I think it's a lovely name and much better to describe the animals than our name. But there are many lovely names in Bantu language. For instance, there's a pretty scented-leaved tree here known as the mopani. And the fan-palms are known as 'ilala'. Somehow it sounds a *graceful* sort of word, and it's just the right name for them, I think, because they're very graceful trees. At a river crossing we came to where there were a whole lot of Bantu men singing in deep fine voices as they pulled a car across on a pont (ferry). Cecil translated the words of their song into a little verse in English. Here it is:

This white man's car  
Has come so far,  
But cannot sail the river.  
If we are quick he  
May give a tickety  
To each—if he's a giver.  
If not—oh well, pull on, my brothers!  
This day will bring us many others!

This day, in spite of its beginning with the funny man, was really one of the best days we spent in the Park. And to round it off, towards sunset when the air was full of mimosa blossom scent, a great grey elephant loomed up in front of us on the road. It looked really tremendous, much bigger than anything I'd seen in a zoo or a circus. I felt really friendly towards it and was half

disappointed when, after peering shortsightedly at us for a while, it flapped its huge ears and trundled off into the bush. That night as I lay on my bed I felt I could have called the day a perfect day if it hadn't been for the antics of the funny man earlier on. But you just wait and see what happened to him the next morning!

It all happened terribly quickly. We were going down the road not long after sunrise when we found ourselves behind the funny man's car. There was nothing for it but to follow him for a while, and presently we saw a lioness lying down beside the road and a big lion sitting in the middle of it near her. Instead of keeping his car going slowly forward—the lion would have got out of the way if he had—the funny man stopped his car, popped his head out of the sun-roof and said, 'Shoo!'

We could see the lion quite clearly from where we were. First he looked a bit surprised. Then we heard a deep rumbling sound and the funny man hastily popped inside his car again, slamming the steel roof to. The next thing we knew the lion had landed with a great roar on the hood of the funny man's car.

After that things got a bit confused. Mr Blackson started hastily turning round saying that we had best go back at once and get one of the rangers. But we had not got very far when we looked back and saw that the funny man was zigzagging in terror behind us with the lion roaring and clawing at his sun-roof. Mr Blackson thought it safest to stop dead still and allow the car to pass. As it went by I looked in at the passengers and couldn't see a smile between them. Not very far past us the lion's efforts began to rock the car dangerously and it looked as if it might capsize. But quite suddenly the lion seemed to lose his grip and sprang off. The funny man shot forward at a terrific speed followed by Mr Blackson, who wasn't going to wait around while the angry lion made up his mind who he was going to work off his temper on.

We reached the camp to find that the funny man in his haste to get to safety had crashed into one of the gate-posts. The whole party had then tumbled out and gone to the authorities to make a complaint against the lion. When Mr Blackson heard this he followed them. He came back looking quite pleased with himself. He said it was the first time he had ever fought a case for a lion

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and was glad to say that he had won and that the funny man had got very little sympathy.

We felt jolly good about this whenever we thought about it for the rest of our stay. It gave us a sort of feeling that we were personal friends of the animals.

Gosh! I've used about an ounce of paper and that's going to cost me or Dad about half-a-crown to send by air mail. I'd better stop now and keep all the rest to tell you when I get home. But I want you to know when you see me in about ten days' time that you're looking at a man who dared the perils of Darkest Africa and lived to tell the tale!

Your loving son (not to mention brother),

Dick.

## INDEX AND PRONUNCIATIONS

|              |                            |                        |               |
|--------------|----------------------------|------------------------|---------------|
| a as in bat  | ā as in bate               | ā as in calm           | ǎ as in ago   |
| e as in bet  | ē as in beat               | i as in bit            | ī as in bite  |
| o as in cot  | ō as in coat               | oo as in soot          | ōō as in boot |
| u as in cut  | ū as in cute               | aw as in fawn          | oi as in boy  |
| g as in gold | ḡ as ch in the Scotch loch | an, French nasalized n |               |

If one syllable is to be stressed more than another it is followed by ' (thus taw-kī').

*Note:* It is not always possible to write in English the *exact* equivalent of the sound of foreign words. You should regard the pronunciations given here as a guide which will enable you to get reasonably close to the correct version.

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## SOME OTHER PRONUNCIATIONS

Aia (ī-a)  
 Alle sitplekke asseblief (al-le sit-plek-  
 ke as-se-blēf)

Baas (bās)  
 Basies (bā-sēs)  
 Beskuit (bis-koit)  
 Biltong (bil-tawng)  
 Blaas-oppies (blās-op-pēs)  
 Bushveld (bush-felt)

Doeks (dūks)  
 Dorp, dorpie (dawrp, dawr-pē)  
 Die Saks Kom Terug (dē saks kom  
 troog)

Faka lo (fa-ka law)  
 Fanakalo (fa-na-ka-law)

Gemeente (gē-mēn-te)

Heerengracht (her-en-graġt)

Jong (yawng)

Kaffraria (ká-fre-rē-a)  
 Kat (kát)  
 Kleurlinge (kloor-lin-ge)  
 Klimmeid (klim-māt)  
 Klonkie (klawn-ke)

Kneg (knēġ)  
 Konfyt (kon-fāt)  
 Koppies (kop-pēs)  
 Kraal (král)

Manel (ma-nel)  
 Meid (māt)  
 Meneer (mi-nēr)

Nagmal (naġ-mal)  
 Nbubu (ne-bōō-bōō)

Outa (ō-tā)

Riembankie (rim-ban-kē)  
 Rooibos (roo-i-bos)

Sangbundel (sang-boon-del)  
 Skei (skā)  
 So vat jou goed en trek, Ferreira (so  
 fat yō goot en trek fir-re-ra)  
 Steenbra (stēn-bra)  
 Stoep (stoop)

Thys (tās)

Umkomaas (oom-kōō-más)

Van Staden (fan sta-den)  
 Veldskoene (felt-skōōn-e)  
 Vierkleur (fēr-klūr)









